

Cycling

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WEEKLY

Thursday July 2, 2015



10 Brits to start Tour!



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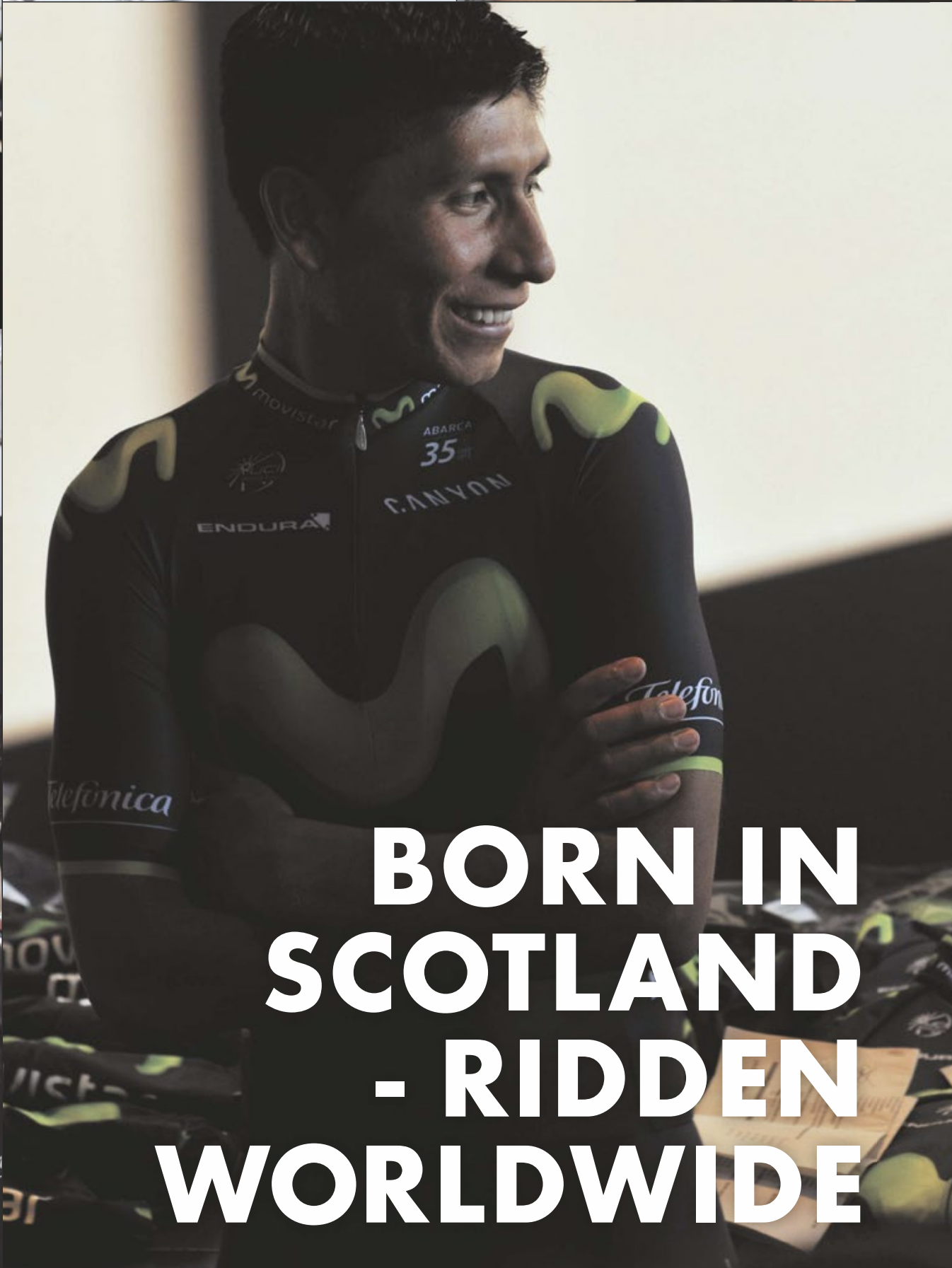
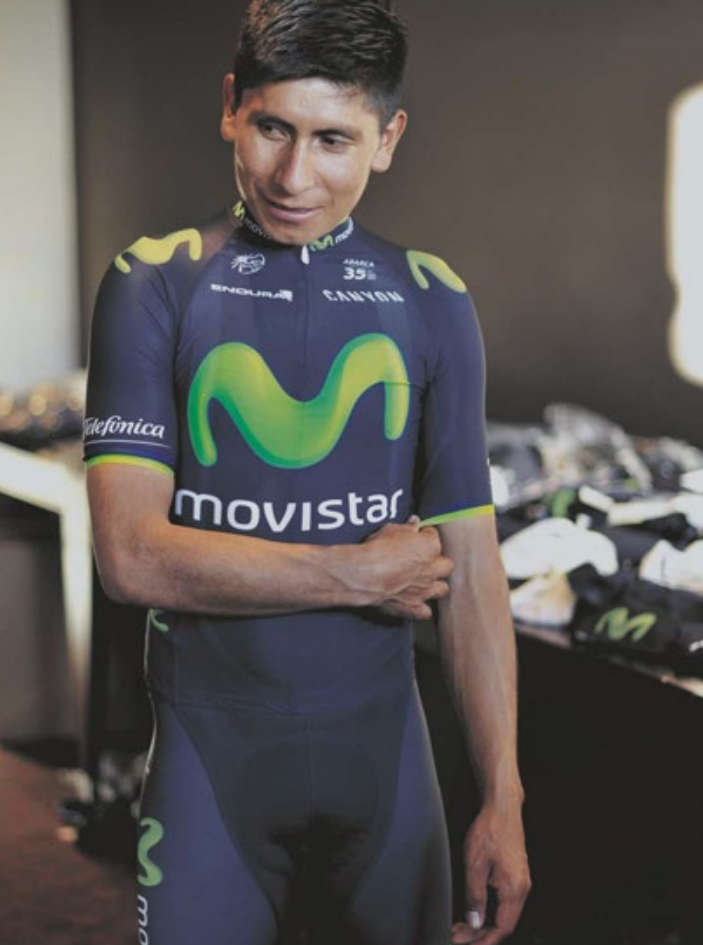
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BORN IN SCOTLAND - RIDDEN WORLDWIDE

It's never going to be easy being the clothing supplier to the World Tour's top ranked team*. Away from the global media attention countless hours are spent in the wind tunnel tweaking for the speed required to win Grand Tour TT's. Pressure mapping software creates pads suitable for rough, gruelling cobbled stages. Litres of sweat splash on the heat chamber floor for every col raced in blistering heat. Every detail must routinely be examined and intensely criticised with an eye to reinvention in a better form, ready for race day. The demands aren't always easy. But then we wouldn't want them to be.

(*UCI Final World Tour Team Rankings 2013 and 2014)



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Four-way Tour battle

The build-up to this year's Tour de France may not match the excitement of last year (unless you're reading this in Utrecht), but with the lack of Yorkshire Tour fever, we can instead get excited about the racing in prospect.

I can't remember the last time we went into a Tour de France with four genuine contenders set to go up against one another. OK, Vincenzo Nibali may not have impressed much this year, but his 2014 build-up was equally innocuous, yet he dominated.

There seems little between Chris Froome, Alberto Contador and Nairo Quintana, and the route offers opportunities for each of them. If they all make it safely through the first week across northern France to the team time trial in Plumelec, the final two weeks will be spectacular.

Another reason to get excited is the performance of the British Yates twins, Adam and Simon. Both have previously ridden a Grand Tour, but in just their second year as pros, they are protected GC riders. A top 10 is not out of the question for either, and that for me is every bit as exciting as the battle for the podium.

I must finish by wishing Robert Garbutt the best of luck for the future. It has been a pleasure to work with him for the last 14 years.



Simon Richardson,
acting editor

Previewing the
Tour's cobbles



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returns to racing



Scott's new
top-end Foil



Riding with
Horsham Cycling



Champ Kennaugh heads record Brit Tour line-up

Most home riders at TdF in 60 years

Fresh from a successful defence of his national road race title in Lincoln on Sunday, Peter Kennaugh will be one of 10 British riders heading to this year's Tour de France — equalling the record from 1955. Kennaugh became only the third male rider — after John Tanner and Roger Hammond — to win back-to-back titles since the championships were unified in 1959. Kennaugh rode away from Mark Cavendish on the historic city's famed Michaelgate climb.

“Having the jersey for the past year, I got to go to some of the most prestigious races to show it off,” said Kennaugh. “So to be able to do that in the Tour is going to be great.”

The 26-year-old Manxman missed out on Sky's team for last year's Tour, having impressed while helping Chris Froome in 2013.

“This time last year, I didn't make the cut for whatever reasons — I still don't know to this day,” he added. “It hurt me deep down that the team didn't show faith in me but this last year I've shown what I can do — at the Tour of Austria, the Vuelta and the Dauphiné.

“The jersey gives me that extra motivation; I can't just get away with sitting at the back of the peloton, as you're easily spotted!”

However, don't expect Kennaugh to just recycle his

custom white bike. “I'm going to change the bike up a bit. I'll come up with something, for sure,” he said.

His Sky team-mates Ian Stannard and Luke Rowe, who placed third and fourth respectively in Lincoln, will also take the Tour start in Utrecht on Saturday, alongside Froome and Geraint Thomas. The latter duo did not compete in the championships; it will be Rowe's debut in the event. Cavendish leads a strong Etixx-Quick Step squad, but admitted he was slightly concerned about his left shoulder after hitting a fan's camera on Michaelgate.

“The first time on Michaelgate, I hit the right one, the one I fell on [at last year's Tour], but that wasn't too bad,” Cavendish said. “Then nearer the end I hit my left shoulder, I hit someone's camera. I'm going to have to get that checked out before the Tour because it doesn't feel great.”

Movistar's Alex Dowsett, who took a fourth victory in the British Time Trial Championships last Thursday but did not compete in the road race and Orica-GreenEdge's Adam Yates will also make their Tour debuts. The latter's brother and team-mate Simon, and MTN-Qhubeka's Steve Cummings, complete the British starters.

■ Full coverage starts on page 80.





MY VIEW...

Nick Bull

Cycling Weekly news writer

What a difference a year makes. Twelve months ago, Geraint Thomas was the last Briton standing come Paris, after a disappointing Tour for our home riders. This time around, there will be over a full team's worth taking the start in Utrecht, and successes aplenty look likely.





Armitstead eyes Worlds glory

Third national title bodes well for Brit's rainbow jersey bid

Nick Bull in Lincoln

Another British title ticked off the list, now for the Worlds: in Lincoln on Sunday, Lizzie Armitstead turned her attention to claiming a maiden rainbow jersey on the road in September after soloing to her third national road crown in the space of five years.

Bouncing back from a nasty crash on the opening stage of the Women's Tour in Aldeburgh 11 days earlier, Armitstead used her power to win atop the cobbled Michaelgate climb, which also continued her record of being on the Championships' podium every year since 2009.

The Boels-Dolmans rider will be in action at the 10-day Giro Rosa that starts

tomorrow (Friday) in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and will play a slightly unfamiliar role as she kicks off her Worlds preparation.

"The focus turns to the Worlds, so I'm going to be domestique there, working for the two Americans on the team," she said. "I'm looking forward to a hard race and putting my nose in the wind."

"The back end of the Worlds course [in Richmond, USA] is hard; it's a seven



Big names fail to show at National TT Champs

British Cycling's cycle sport and membership director Jonny Clay believes more needs to be done to make the National Time Trial Championships a more attractive event for the country's best riders.

Men's winner Alex Dowsett was the only WorldTour rider to compete at last Thursday's event at Cadwell Park, while Geraint Thomas and Steve Cummings were among those who entered but failed to take the start. Former rower Hayley Simmonds took the women's title.

BC's decision to move the championships to an end of June date, as is the case in most European countries, significantly bolstered the 2013 and 2014 events but this year's event evidently failed to capture male riders' imagination.

"If I'm honest, I'm a bit disappointed that some of the big names just pulled out," said Clay. "It's a shame — and I'm not talking about those who notified us early [that they wouldn't be riding], but those who didn't notify us at all.

"We need to work on that in terms of understanding why riders commit to ride but don't. How do we encourage our best time triallists to ride?

"The women's event was solid, they've been great all weekend in terms of what they've contributed, but how good would it have been if Chris Froome had ridden?"

Froome didn't enter, but did consider a ride in the event. Elsewhere, Sir Bradley Wiggins opted against defending his title, but was seen riding the route with amateurs on Saturday.

"We had a safe pair of hands in charge this week, as Ian [Emmerson, race organiser and former British Cycling president] has put on the Lincoln GP for so many years," added Clay. "They put on a good, safe event."

minute, relentless effort into the finish. I'm glad I've seen it, and I'll taper my training a bit, as you'll need sprinting legs and not climbing legs there."

The 26-year-old Yorkshirewoman also signalled that she wants more than three British titles on the road. "It's not really sweeter," she replied when asked if this victory meant more than those in Stamfordham in 2011 and Glasgow two years later. "I'm going to go for a few more — three's just a number."

Alice Barnes, 19, and a member of British Cycling's Olympic Academy mountain bike programme, finished an impressive second, with last year's winner Laura Trott in third.

"That hill didn't suit me; it's not my thing," said Trott. "Everybody said treat it like an elimination race — as if there's a big hill like that in an elimination race!

"I don't do that much road, so it was hard to do the jersey proud, in a way. I loved riding in it, though."

A full-page photograph of Chris Froome, a professional cyclist, riding a Pinarello road bike on a steep, rocky climb. He is wearing a black and blue Team Sky jersey with 'sky' and 'FROOME' visible, a blue helmet, and sunglasses. The background is a blurred, sunlit mountain trail.

Froome's last-minute Tour prep

British favourite scouts Alpine climbs with top domestiques

Richard Abraham

Even in professional cycling there's a place for some last-minute cramming. One week ahead of the Grand Départ of the Tour de France in Utrecht on Saturday July 4, Chris Froome was out on an Alpine reconnaissance mission to brush up on his knowledge of

the key climbs set to feature in the last week of the race.

The Team Sky leader, 30, had already previewed the key climbs in the Pyrenees and last Sunday took teammates Richie Porte, Nicolas Roche and Wout Poels, the likely backbone of his Tour team, on a recce ride in the Southern Alps, including a trip up the 2,250m Col d'Allos.

The category-one ascent features on stage 17 of this year's Tour before a summit finish at Pra Loup. A carbon copy of the 161-kilometre stage was included in this year's Critérium du Dauphiné and it was the technical, high-speed descent off the mountain that provided a springboard for Romain Bardet's stage winning attack.

Last week Froome also admitted in a pre-Tour press conference in Monte

Carlo that he had missed two anti-doping tests in his career, the latest while on holiday at a swanky Italian hotel earlier this year.

"I had a couple of recovery days and so I took my wife down to quite an exclusive hotel in Italy," said Froome. "On the first morning, the authorities pitched up at seven and the hotel staff actually wouldn't give them access to our room and also refused to let them call up. So that was a hugely



frustrating situation for me.”

The issue of missed tests has been in the news after British distance runner Mo Farah was revealed to have missed two anti-doping tests in the run-up to the 2012 Olympic Games. Froome admitted his mistake and maintained that it was an athlete’s professional duty to make themselves available for testing.

“I did appeal to try and explain the circumstances to the authorities but at the end of the day I take full responsibility for that case,” Froome added.

“I just didn’t see this one coming but it’s opened my eyes and I’m definitely going to be more proactive in the future. It’s always the athlete’s responsibility to make sure he or she is available for testing.”

National Champs around the world

As was the case in 2014, Vincenzo Nibali (below) warmed up for the Tour de France by winning the Italian national road race title. He soloed to win Sunday’s race in Superga, barely 150km away from the French Alpine climbs on which the Astana rider will seek to defend his Tour crown. The victory was Nibali’s first of the season.

Alejandro Valverde will show off the Spanish colours at the Tour after winning his country’s title for the first time since 2008, while Slovak Peter Sagan took his fifth consecutive title.

However, the French *tricolore* won’t be on show at the Tour, after surprise package Steven Tronet, riding for the third-tier Auber 93 squad, beat established pros such as Tony Gallopin, Sylvain Chavanel, Julian Alaphilippe and Thomas Voeckler.

France

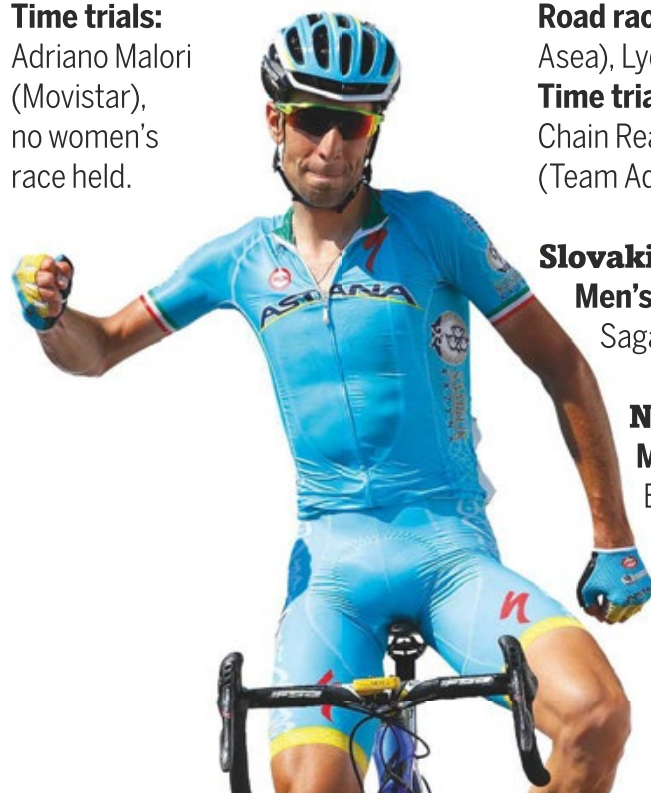
Road races: Steven Tronet (Auber 93), Pauline Ferrand-Prévot (Rabo-Liv).

Time trials: Jérôme Coppel (IAM), Audrey Cordon (Wiggle-Honda).

Italy

Road races: Vincenzo Nibali (Astana), Elena Cecchini (Lotto-Soudal).

Time trials: Adriano Malori (Movistar), no women’s race held.



Netherlands

Road races: Niki Terpstra (Etixx-Quick Step), Lucinda Brand (Rabo-Liv).

Time trials: Wilco Kelderman (LottoNL-Jumbo), Anna van der Breggen (Rabo-Liv).

Germany

Road races: Emanuel Buchmann (Bora-Argon 18), Trixi Worrack (Velocio-SRAM).

Time trials: Tony Martin (Etixx-Quick Step), Mieke Kröger (Velocio-SRAM).

Belgium

Road races: Preben van Hecke (Topsport Vlaanderen), Jolien D’Hoore (Wiggle-Honda).

Time trials: Jurgen van den Broeck (Lotto-Soudal), Ann-Sophie Duyck (Topsport Vlaanderen).

Spain

Road races: Alejandro Valverde (Movistar), Anna Sanchis (Wiggle-Honda).

Time trials: Jonathan Castroviejo (Movistar), Anna Sanchis (Wiggle-Honda).

Ireland

Road races: Damien Shaw (Team Asea), Lydia Boylan (Team WNT).

Time trials: Ryan Mullen (An Post-Chain Reaction), Siobhan Horgan (Team Aqua Blue).

Slovakia

Men’s road race and TT: Peter Sagan (Tinkoff-Saxo).

Norway

Men’s road race and TT: Edvald Boasson Hagen (MTN-Qhubeka).

Landslides rule out the Galibier

Iconic climb scrapped by ASO over safety concerns

Landslides in the Alps earlier this year forced the Tour de France organisers to remove last week the majestic Col du Galibier from this year's race, with the riders now diverted over the nearby Col de la Croix de Fer.

The penultimate stage, stage 20, of this year's race will now take riders from Modane to Alpe d'Huez via the Croix de Fer following the closure of the Chambon tunnel, which links the Galibier to Alpe d'Huez via the Col du Lautaret.

First crossed by the race in 1911, the Col du Galibier (pictured, when *CW* visited last month) last featured in the Tour in 2011, when it hosted a summit finish, won by Andy Schleck, and was included in the following day's short mountain stage, finishing on Alpe d'Huez, which was due to be repeated this year.

At 2,067m, the Croix de Fer is a suitable deputy for the Galibier (2,645m) and indeed is scheduled to make an appearance on stage 19 to La Toussuire. The Croix de Fer, meaning 'Iron Cross' is 29.5 kilometres long, has an average gradient of 5.5 per cent and was last used in the Tour de France in 2012.

As the length of the 20th stage remains unchanged at 110.5km, the replacement climb should not affect the dynamics of the short mountain stage. However, the approach to the foot of Alpe d'Huez will now feature a slightly longer flat section.

The new highest point of this year's race is the Col d'Allos on stage 17 at 2,250m — the first rider over the summit will be awarded the annual Souvenir Henri Desgrange in memory of the Tour's founder.



Guest column

Charly Wegelius



“Clearing the finish is no easy task on a mountain infested with thousands of inebriated race fans”

“I hated the Tour de France as a rider, and I can’t say I love it from the seat of a car either. The Point de Passage Obligatoire, or PPO, is a spot, usually on the periphery of a start town, chosen by the race organiser by which all vehicles making their way to the start must pass. It is a key target if you want to stay on time and out of trouble. Approaching the start without passing by this point will likely put you on the wrong side of race barriers and firmly in the chaotic, traffic-laden world that buzzes around the outside of the race bubble. Not a cool place to be with four cars, a bus, and nine nervous cyclists. While missing this point is not, for obvious reasons, advisable, it can happen. In most races this can be solved with the help of a friendly policeman, some people to move barriers, and a grovelling apology to the race organiser. No chance at the Tour de France. I would not fancy the chances of anyone laying their hands on a barrier set down by ASO.

Another thing I wouldn’t mess with at the Tour is the police. The elite Garde Républicaine keep the race safe with their fleet of motorcyclists. Their riding skills are really quite impressive. They travel in formation, in such a tight line that from the rear view mirror only one motorcyclist is visible, the others are stuck to him like glue. Beyond keeping the race rolling, they also look after the publicity caravan and organise mass evacuations from mountain-top finishes.

In most races the teams are left to their own devices after a summit finish. This can lead to long, protracted transfers to hotels, as spectators, camper vans, and crews dismantling barriers block the road. At the Tour nobody moves until the police say so. All the team vehicles are held at the summit, and escorted down by the police. This is no simple task on a mountain infested with thousands of inebriated fans. Waiting at the summit for the police to give us the green light can seem frustrating at times, and one could be tempted to go it alone. But when you see the speed and ease with which they clear the roads for us, it soon becomes clear that staying in tow with the cops is the only way to do it!

While I won’t have sore legs this July, I will have plenty to keep me busy, and at times stressed. Spare a thought if you drive past an odd-looking sign reading ‘PPO’ while you are out watching the race. Enjoy the show!”

Sports director Charly Wegelius will be driving the Cannondale-Garmin team car at the Tour and providing CW with his expert insight

Brits Abroad

Melissa Lowther, 19

Matrix Fitness,
Oudenaarde, Belgium

Where are you? I'm in Belgium. I really like it here because there are all types of terrain. It's even nicer when it's sunny but, to be honest, the weather's just the same as Yorkshire where I'm from, perhaps a little warmer.

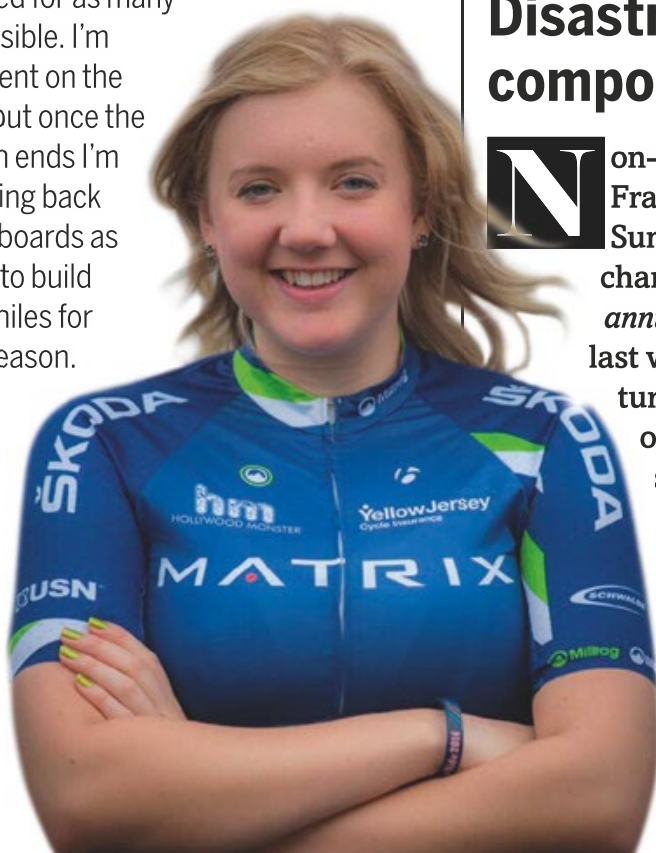
What's the racing like? Aggressive and longer than the UK with huge fields of up to 200 riders. The first two races were a shock to the system but I feel more confident getting through races now and am not as nervous beforehand.

How's the form? I'd never ridden cobbles before I came here and the first race was the Omloop Het Nieuwsblad so I had to get used to riding in the gutter quickly. I've definitely improved since and my team manager only lives down the road and I can always ask him if I have any problems.

How's life? Great, I quite like living abroad. The training is better than at home and unlike home I don't need a car to get to the shops. I've just finished the first of six years doing an Open University course in International Studies. I'm on 82 per cent at the moment.

Anything you miss? Going to Nando's with my friends!

What's next? There are a lot of stage races on the calendar so I'm aiming to get selected for as many as possible. I'm confident on the track but once the season ends I'm not going back to the boards as I want to build base miles for next season.



No Tour for beleaguered Kittel

Disastrous season for German powerhouse compounded by deselection from Tour line-up

Non-selection for the Tour de France and another DNF at Sunday's German road race championships: Marcel Kittel's *annus horribilis* continued last week. It's a remarkable turnaround for the 27-year-old German, who won four stages apiece in the last two Tours, including back-to-back triumphs on the Champs-Élysées.

Kittel has completed just 20 race days in 2015 thus far — the same number he

would have had to finish to simply get to Paris on July 26. His poor form has been attributed to a virus that it's believed he picked up in between his participation at the Tour Down Under in January and the following month's Tour of Qatar.

After he spent two weeks at altitude atop Sierra Nevada at the end of May and early June, he achieved a season's best result — sixth in the Rund um Köln on June 14 — which suggested he was on track for the Tour.

So why wasn't he picked? As Kittel said, there are several good chances for sprinters at the Tour, particularly



in the first week and end of the second.

“Of course, after this long pause, the team is uncertain as to how long my form would hold at the Tour,” he said. “But, then again, nobody knows what would have happened had I started.”

He has a point. Then again, Kittel hasn’t won since he took the final stage of the Tour of Britain in Westminster last September — a long time for a sprinter (we’re not counting the non-UCI-ranked Tour Down Under prelude criterium). So what would have been the chance of him breaking that duck at the Tour?

It appears Giant have cut their losses by not selecting him. In Milan San Remo and Paris-Roubaix champion John Degenkolb they have a fast finisher who can compete in bunch sprints and also the more unconventional flat stages; think of the cobbles en route to Cambrai on stage four, and two days later when an 850m climb averaging seven per cent ends the stage into Le Havre.

He may not be as quick as Mark Cavendish or André Greipel in a straight shoot-out, but Degenkolb’s versatility

Another UK Grand Départ in 2017?

The Tour de France could be back in the UK as early as 2017 as the office of the Mayor of London confirmed it is in early discussions about bidding to bring the Grand Départ back to the capital. London was the finish for stage three of the 2014 Tour following the Yorkshire Grand Départ, and last hosted a Grand Départ in 2007 with a prologue time trial and a road stage in Kent.

Bouhanni Tour doubt

Nacer Bouhanni’s ticket to the Tour de France looked to be in doubt following a crash at the French National Championships last Sunday. The 24-year-old Cofidis sprinter was taken out by FDJ’s Anthony Roux during the sprint finish (Roux was later disqualified for his dangerous manoeuvre) and suffered a heavy crash. Bouhanni sustained injuries to his ribs, later confirmed to be damage to his cartilage, which could hinder his sprinting ability even if he does start the race.

Here’s looking at blue, Cannondale-Garmin

Blue and green must never be seen but Cannondale-Garmin lived up to their contrary reputation last week when they revealed a new jersey design for the Tour de France, with blue making its way back into the iconic argyle pattern that has been in the peloton since 2007. Ireland’s Dan Martin will take his place as one of three team leaders at the Tour alongside Andrew Talansky and Ryder Hesjedal.

makes him a contender for the green jersey. Based on 2015 form, he is a far safer bet than Kittel. And what would have been the point of using a proven race victor as part of a lead-out for a misfiring Kittel?

“You should always be aware that somebody else may come along and make you number two,” Kittel said, almost prophetically, during the Tour of Qatar back in February.

“I actually believe you cannot plan that [being dominant]. It’s not a plan for me to rule sprinting for five years.”

LAST WEEK

Monday June 22

It emerged that tacks were scattered on the road during the Redhill CC's 70th anniversary road race the previous day — the second time in as many years that the event has been targeted by saboteurs.

Tuesday June 23

It was announced that Sir Bradley Wiggins would ride in the opening round of the 2015/16 Revolution series at the Derby velodrome between August 14-16 this year.

Wednesday June 24

Dutch police announced plans to protest during the opening two stages of the 2015 Tour de France in the Netherlands in a row over pay. Striking officers plan to ride on the course of the opening stage time trial in Utrecht to carry out traffic checks.

Thursday June 25

Cycling minister Robert Goodwill MP said in a speech in Newcastle that a £23m cut in funding for the Cycling Ambition Cities project should not inhibit its success, adding that the government was also starting work on its Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.

Friday June 26

Lance Armstrong confirmed that he would ride stages 13 and 14 of the Tour de France a day before the race alongside former footballer and charity fund-raiser Geoff Thomas.

Saturday June 27

Pauline Ferrand-Prévot took road race honours at the French national championships, beating time trial winner Audrey Cordon by two minutes. The 23-year-old is yet to finish outside the top 10 in a stage, GC or one-day race this year.

Sunday June 28

Niki Terpstra won his third career Dutch Road Race Championship, pipping Giant-Alpecin's Ramon Sinkeldam and Trek's Danny van Poppel to the line in Emmen. Terpstra has not been included in Etixx-Quick-Step's Tour de France line-up.

A whopper for a Chopper

Fan to ride Tour route on legendary kids' bike

If you're planning to stay in a Tour de France host town over the coming weeks, then you may see a mad Brit on a Raleigh Chopper.

Starting with a 13.8km time trial in Utrecht today (June 2), Dave Sims is tracing the route of this year's race two days ahead of the peloton on the eight-speed bike to raise £5,000 for Help for Heroes.

If covering the 3,360km on a road bike is difficult enough, how will Sims cope on a retro bike designed for children in the 1960s and 1970s, while staying in a motorhome for three weeks?

Chopper-specific training

"It's going to be difficult, I know that," said 36-year-old Sims, who hails from Southport, Merseyside.

"I'm nervous about my bike's brakes because they aren't designed for rides like this, and I will be reliant on the front brakes because the bike weighs 16kg.

"If it's wet, I will have to descend with the brakes on constantly.

"I can't make up time on the descents, I can't get aero, and after a week I'm not sure of the toll it would have taken.

"[Bike business] VeloSmith have built me adapted wheels for the Belgian cobbles because a 16-inch wheel can buckle over any bump in the road, never mind cobbles. I could be riding for very long days."

The challenge, inspired after riding L'Étape du Tour last year on the bike, has seen Sims train in a manner few before him have ever done.

"I've been doing hill reps up



Hardknott Pass and Wrynose Pass. That was an important milestone, for I knew if I could get up them two, then I can do the Pyrenees and the Alps, which are much shallower gradients but just a lot longer.

"I'm excited by the mountains."

Dave Sims's Raleigh Mk3 Chopper

- 15.9kg aluminium construction
- Single chainring of 46 teeth
- 8-speed Sturmey-Archer hub
- Original 20in red-line rear tyre
- Original 16in red-line front tyre
- Adapted wheels and tyres for cobbles
- One rusty original horn

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To do this week...

Ride

Bike Bath, Sunday, July 5

Ride from the ancient city of Bath and into the challenging Mendip Hills. Around 4,700 feet of climbing is crammed into the 80-mile route, including the 2.6-mile Cheddar Gorge which bites at 16 per cent. "The Two Tunnels Greenway, Cheddar Gorge and beautiful villages are all highlights," organisers say. Entry costs £33 or £35 on the day. A shorter 25-mile ride is £18 (£20 on the day). po.st/BikeBath



They'll go up even faster on July 4

Race

Côte de Jenkin Road hill-climb, Saturday, July 4

Sheffield's Jenkin Road, famed for its role in last year's Tour de France Grand Départ, is now the host of a summer hill-climb. Fully closed to traffic, expect a carnival atmosphere as riders produce a lung-busting effort for 800 metres against the clock up the 30 per cent gradient. Entry £5 (£15 on the day). po.st/JenkinHillClimb

Go

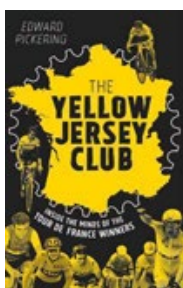
Staffordshire Cycling Festival, Stafford, July 3-4

Now an established part of Britain's cycling calendar, this two-day festival combines family-orientated events, a two-distance sportive and rounds of British Cycling's Elite Circuit, Grand Prix and Women's Road Series. Online entry for the event's sportive has closed, but entry on the day may be possible. www.ridestaffs.co.uk

Read

The Yellow Jersey Club by Edward Pickering

Released just in time for the Tour, *The Yellow Jersey Club* takes an in-depth look at the psychology and physiology of the race's winners over the past 40 years. While some of the history and facts behind each winner is well documented, the book proves an insightful, informative and analytical look at those who have stood on the top step in Paris. RRP £20. www.transworldbooks.co.uk



Weekly column Rob Hayles



"I'd hang my damp smalls from the steering wheel or over the headrests to dry. It got a bit funky"

This week I'm off to Le Tour, and packing my bag for a bike race these days is pretty easy. No longer is it so important to be prepared for rain, sun, heat or the cold. I don't need a skinsuit for a TT, or have to pack spare kit in case of a crash. These days it's not a bike saddle I have to spend my days sitting on, it's normally a plastic chair in the commentary box.

The 2013 Giro was my first Grand Tour on site, and as I packed my bag in readiness for the three-and-a-half weeks on the road, the words of wisdom I'd heard on numerous occasions from my pro-wrestling dad — an accomplished world traveller — rang loud and clear in my ears. "One on, one in the wash, and one ready to wear."

When I met up with the rest of the BBC Radio 5 Live team in the airport, they looked at me with a little confusion. "Where's your suitcase?" they asked as I stood with my compact hand luggage. I told them this was all I had.

"You're joking," said the producer, his kitbag bursting at the seams. It was so heavy he needed to chalk his hands every time he picked it up. I was proud of my packing, and over the period of the trip the only downside I could find with it was the moaning from the other guys about our hire car being used each day for drying my clothes.

I'd wash everything each evening and then, during the day, while parked up at the stage, I'd hang my damp smalls from the steering wheel or over the headrests to dry. As you might imagine, this didn't go down overly well day after day. And by the final week, the car was getting pretty funky inside.

So, with this in mind, my packing for what will be my fourth Grand Tour has evolved quite a lot. Not only have I learned to refine my limited wardrobe down to a tee. This year I will be taking something new, which should go down very well with my co-workers: for the first time, I'll be packing an air-freshener. Let's just hope, for their sake, it doesn't get confiscated along with my deodorant at airport security.

Former double world track champion, Rob Hayles is a pundit for TV and radio. He's also a coffee connoisseur and garden shed inventor



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Beaumont trained on track for latest record ride

Scottish squad assisted adventurer

Chris Marshall-Bell

Glasgow's Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome has another claim alongside hosting last year's Commonwealth Games: it was the setting for Mark Beaumont's preparations for riding across Africa solo.

The adventurer completed his challenge, riding 6,718 miles from Cairo, Egypt, to Cape Town, South Africa in late May in just 41 days and 10 hours, substantially quicker than his pre-ride ambition of 50 days.

Beaumont, the former world record holder for riding around the world and cycling across the Americas, set

the benchmark just 80 days after South African Keegan Longueira had broken the record by riding it in 59 days.

"I know I have a diesel engine to go all day so I thought I'd go the opposite way, up the power and speed by training on the track," he told *CW*, about his preparation.

"I trained for seven months with the Scottish Cycling endurance squad, boys who are a decade younger than I. They really pushed me."

The Scotsman opted for a different set-up to his previous expeditions to maximise his chances in

setting a record that stands for as long as possible.

"Unlike in the past when I've rode a touring bike, I was racing unsupported this time and on a bespoke bike — the dream machine — that took five months to build," the 32-year-old added.

"It was a carbon road bike with Shimano Di2 hydraulic disc brakes.

"In Ethiopia and Kenya, there was a lot of stretches of dirt road which made for tough terrain and limited me to 80-100 miles a day. It was more like cyclo-cross.

"When I began to go through Botswana and South Africa, I upped the mileage to 230 miles, living off four-and-a-half-hour sleeps. I was riding at 4.30am until 10pm."

Sleepless in the saddle

Sleep deprivation, an attempted mugging from a drunk, food poisoning, fearing the actions of bull elephants, having stones thrown at him and "riding 16 hours on tri-bars in an aero position every day" made it the "hardest I've ever pushed myself on a bike".

He foresees the discipline of ultra-riding growing.

"I honestly think in years to come we will see the pros and semi-pros turning their attention to ultra-racing.

"Ten years ago, without social media, it was a lot harder to do ultra-riding, as less people knew about it.

"Ultra-riding unsupported and getting tough records is the future."

Riis named and shamed

Bjarne Riis was complicit in a large-scale doping programme at Team CSC, according to a long-awaited report into Danish cycling published by Anti-Doping Denmark. The 96-page report, commissioned in the fall-out of the Lance Armstrong scandal, says that Riis was aware of riders on the team were taking banned substances, and that he even arranged for one rider, German Jörg Jaksche, to receive EPO.

However, the World Anti-Doping Agency's eight-year statute of limitation rule means Riis and others — including Tinkoff-Saxo DS Nicki Sorensen — will not face disciplinary action.

London death demo

Hundreds of cyclists took part in a protest at the City of London's busy Bank junction on Wednesday after a cyclist was killed there two days earlier. Ying Tao, 26, became the eighth cyclist to die on the capital's roads in 2015 when she was struck by a lorry during the morning rush hour on June 22. Around 400 people are believed to have joined the demonstration, organised by the London Cycling Campaign.



Photos: Cor Vos

Giro to go Dutch

Like this year's Tour, next year's Giro d'Italia will start in the Netherlands, race organiser RCS confirmed on Friday. As rumoured, the race will begin with a prologue in Apeldoorn on Friday May 6, and will be followed by two further stages around the Gelderland region, situated south-east of Amsterdam. The Giro last started in the Netherlands in 2010, where Bradley Wiggins won an 8.4km time trial.

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Hoy calls for UCI support in Japan

Olympian expresses concern over proposed change to velodrome location for Tokyo Olympics in 2020

Sophie Smith

Sir Chris Hoy has called on the UCI to fight for cycling to prevent elite track riders from being isolated from the athletes' village at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

Hoy believes a revised proposal that would see track competition moved almost 100 miles from the Olympic village in Tokyo to Izu is not a feasible option.

The bid would see a temporary, nearby velodrome facility (included in an original blueprint) scrapped for an existing track in Izu, as organisers focus on cost and sustainability.

"It will be a real shame for cycling and for the cyclists if they were isolated in a satellite location hundreds of miles away. A major part

of the Olympic experience is being in the Olympic vicinity," Hoy said.

"It's a highly built-up area in which space is at a premium, so they may not be able to locate the velodrome within a stone's throw of the main Olympic stadium — that's understandable," he continued. "But they must be able to find somewhere they can house a 250m track that is within a certain distance."

The velodrome switch may be conceded; discussions between the UCI, Tokyo and the International Olympic Committee are ongoing.

UCI president Brian Cookson has reportedly said that he would be prepared to accept the change if the existing 1,500-capacity velodrome were renovated, but would work for other disciplines to

return closer to the capital.

"I would hope that Brian Cookson and the UCI would show the commitment to track cycling that they're showing to road cycling," Hoy said.

A UCI spokesman said no compromise had been reached: "This is not a done deal by any means. We are aware that Tokyo 2020 are looking at alternative ways of delivering the Tokyo Games and to reduce costs," he said.

"We are concerned that any proposal to change important elements from the original bid shouldn't disadvantage or diminish the athletes' experience."

A British Olympic Association spokesperson said it would take a closer look at the potential repercussions for athletes during a trip to Tokyo in July.



Izu velodrome is 100 miles from athletes' village

Photos: Courtesy of Gensler, Graham Watson





London Six set for October

Six-day racing will return to London this winter after October dates were confirmed for the inaugural London Six Day at the Lee Valley Velodrome.

Taking place between October 18-23, the event will stick to the traditional six-day format that proves popular on the Continent but will include women's and junior racing.

Tickets were due to go on sale yesterday for British Cycling members and will go on general sale at 11am on July 4 at www.sixday.com.

Brad's swansong?

Will the 2016 Ghent Six be Sir Bradley Wiggins's last competitive outing? Wiggins has reportedly said as much privately, and race director Patrick Sercu last week admitted he has spoken to the World Hour record holder about his returning to the event he previously rode in 2003 and 2007.

"In the week between the Tour of Flanders and Paris-Roubaix, I spoke with Wiggins in Kortrijk," Sercu told Belgian newspaper *Het Nieuwsblad*. "I asked Bradley if he would like to ride six-day cycle races again. His answer: 'Very much.'"

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THE BIG QUESTION

“What really irritates you in the world of cycling?”

People snot-rocketing with no regard to proximity or wind direction.

Bronwen Banner

The list of dos and don'ts that seem to cover kit in road cycling. The narrow-minded people who think that road cycling should purely be about how fast you can go so it's Lycra or nothing; road shoes not ones you could walk through the pub in; bidons not Camelbaks, etc. Rules that make it really hard for a beginner to feel at home with cyclists. The laughing at people who make 'mistakes' with their kit because they break the 'rules'. Some cyclists are so up themselves and act like idiots, putting people off the sport because they are not 'serious about speed.'

Becky Trower

Having to work instead of being out cycling.

Graham Parsons

When I have just started a ride and I puncture. The young drivers who find it hilarious to drive past with the window open and yell at me, and try and slap me on the back. The comedian at the coffee stop who asks what drugs I want. The mountain bikers who do not return my wave.

Graham Ide

When the power pack is dead on my Specialized Venge's Dura-Ace Di2 components so I have to ride my other Specialized Venge with the regular Dura-Ace group and shift gears with cables like it's the Stone Age or something.

Jason De Graaf

When my wheel sensor and bike computer have a hissy fit and stop talking to each other halfway through a ride. I know, I know, I should get a GPS, but I'm old fashioned.

Sam Westhead

People posting their ride to a shop on Strava. No one cares if you ran out of milk!

Iain Pitt

Nothing irritates me much... just crap road surfaces, potholes, dog crap on paths, extending dog leads, dogs off leads, pedestrians/joggers wearing headphones, cars not using indicators, cars attempting to overtake on approach to red light, left hooking, buses/lorries coming up behind you to within a foot of your rear wheel, heat in the summer, cold in the winter, clicks/rattles, poor shifting, flat tyres, rain just as you start/finish a ride, mega wind for homeward



Grizzled road surfaces yield a grumble

commute... and a few others that I've forgotten about.

Steven Saunders

Let's address doping in competitive cycling once and for all. Harsh penalties defined at the start of a season and a zero-tolerance lifetime ban for all dopers. Let's get confidence back in cycling, where 100 per cent of the riders are clean. Seems we are still seeing a drip feed of riders found doping.

Wayne Tipping

Headwinds. Rain, sleet, snow, hail, heat, bring it on — I have the clothing to deal with it. But headwinds...

John Butler

Next week's big question...

What's the most embarrassing thing you've done while cycling?

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Letters

Letter of the week
wins a Lazer O2
helmet worth £69.99



Bad shot

STAR
LETTER

I love cycling, coffee and launching assaults on my local hill, and last week in an attempt to improve my time on my nearest hill I set out early after downing a performance-enhancing home-brewed espresso. The assault was going well until near the end when my espresso began to move.

Nearing the summit the espresso rapidly reversed its previous direction and intended physiological destination and unexpectedly launched itself over my bars and onto the tarmac. I couldn't see a point in stopping as I'd worked so hard on the climb and was nearing the top. To stop wouldn't change what had occurred and as I was standing at this point in the climb the espresso hadn't decorated my bike.

I kept going and achieved my best time yet. Fortunately no one was around to witness the event. There isn't a particular moral to the story except in future I shall leave a little more time between my pre-ride espresso and heading out on a heroic session.

Damian Churchill, email

The back Storey

Forgive me for asking, but why was Dame Sarah Storey taking part in the Women's Tour? Every time I watched each stage on the TV she was always at the back. What was going on?

Stu Chapman, email

Dry your eyes

I've seen many self-righteous letters from people complaining about being "ignored" by other cyclists when on the bike. These people should grow up and get a thicker skin. While I often acknowledge other cyclists around where I live, sometimes I do not. It does not make me a good or bad person, and to judge me for it either way would be shortsighted.

The fact is that the roads around where I live are often terrible and littered with potholes and uneven tarmac. The A46 is particularly dangerous. I often need to keep both hands on the handlebars and my eyes fixed on the road, in order to maintain control of my bike in busy, fast traffic.

Alan Bouskill's letter (CW June 18) appalled me — here is a man who paints himself as a "good" man, yet what sort of person leaves a fellow cyclist in trouble by the side of the road (as Alan smugly said he did) for the oh-so-terrible crime of "not saying hello"? He should be ashamed of himself.

Alastair Milne, Cheltenham

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Funding cuts

How ironic that the very week the CTC's Roger Geffen is awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for his tireless campaigning and planning work for cycling, Her Majesty's government slashes funding for the Cycling City Ambition programme.

Keith Bingham, Dorking



Classic HELMS

Johnny Helms was *Cycling Weekly's* resident cartoonist from February 1946 until November 2009.

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Riding the climbs of the 2015 Tour

The author of *100 Greatest Cycling Climbs of the Tour de France* gives us the lowdown on riding his pick of this year's ascents

Words: Simon Warren Photos: Daniel Gould and Chris Catchpole



1 Mur de Huy

Ardennes, Belgium

Features on stage three

The Mur de Huy is a climb with such a fearsome reputation that it has your heart thumping out of your chest long before you hit it. You may have seen the pros romping and dancing up its 25 per cent slopes during the finale of La Flèche Wallonne but trust me, that bears no resemblance

to what you'll be doing. The key to your attack is to stay behind that invisible red line that lies somewhere within your body as once you cross it and things really start to hurt, it'll feel as though you're riding through treacle. Pedal softly away from the base, following the 'Huy' logos that are permanently stencilled onto the tarmac up to the notorious left-right bends. Try to stay in your comfort zone through these curves

because when you exit, the slope gets even harder. Ramping up past the neat line of houses on the left it hits its maximum 25 per cent and will have you grovelling, but the finish is in sight now so it's time to give your all and try to hold that effort as the slope eases to finish on the flat.

Length: 204m

Height gained: 125m

Average gradient: 9.6%

CW rating

9



Few roads on Earth have
as many bends per km
as Lacets de Montvernier

2 Col du Soudet

Pyrenees-Atlantiques

Features on stage 10

The first HC climb of this year's race, the Col du Soudet is a real monster and you can trace its origins way back to the town of Arette. From here the first seven kilometres are set on an utterly benign two per cent slope, but it still takes its toll on the legs. The real action

kicks off as you pass through the village of La Mouline and it's not long before you pass signs advertising some 15 per cent gradient. It's unusual to see gradient warning signs in the Pyrenees because it's all bloody steep, so when they have made the effort to erect one you know you're in for trouble. They are prematurely placed and it's some time before you reach the tough stuff

but when you do it hits you for six and then delivers you into very hostile territory. With the average fluctuating between 9 and 10 per cent for kilometre after kilometre this is just the welcome to the Pyrenees the riders will not have wanted, but it's this punishing gradient that sets them apart from the Alps. Ten kilometres after leaving La Mouline you reach a micro-summit within the Col, that of the Col du Labays and after this the ride, thankfully becomes much easier. A few kilometres at five per cent just leaves the final kick set on a seven per cent slope to reach the summit, passing through a primeval rocky landscape to the resort of La Pierre-Saint-Martin.

Length: 15.3km

Height gained: 1,134m

Average gradient: 7.4%

CW rating

9

3 Col d'Aspin

Hautes-Pyrenees

Features on stage 11

The Col d'Aspin is one of those Pyrenean climbs that's famous for being the bridesmaid, never the bride. It's there to warm the legs up, to dispatch the fat sprinters to the Autobus and force the selection of mountain men and their lieutenants to go and fight it out on the bigger ascents up the road. Of course compared to British climbs it's a giant but it's far from the hardest climb in the Pyrenees — the lower slopes average a very gentle three-five per cent to give you ample time to find a good rhythm. You may feel the urge to ride a bigger gear than you should but save yourself because what starts out at three-five per cent just a few kilometres up the road quickly becomes seven per cent. It's still manageable but certainly steep enough to get the sweat flowing and the lungs burning. It's when three-five per cent turns into eight then nine per cent that the alarm bells start to ring and the engine room will be screaming for more coal to fuel the legs which will be running at full capacity. Twisting and snaking up towards the ridge, the final few kilometres back off a fraction to average out at eight per cent. They are hard, and it is often a hard-fought struggle to finish at the open plateau at the top.

Length: 12km

Height gained: 785m

Average gradient: 6.5%

CW rating

8

4 Col du Tourmalet

Hautes-Pyrenees

Features on stage 11

The Col du Tourmalet is a place where you can experience summer and winter in the space of a few hours. You'll likely set off from the base, jersey unzipped, sweat flowing into your eyes but upon reaching the summit, find yourself surrounded by snow with a 20-degree drop in temperature, such is the huge difference in altitude. With this in mind always pack a jacket, don't worry about the extra 150 grams in your back pocket ruining your KoM attempt. What use is a golden crown if you die of hypothermia? The Tour climbs the shorter side of the Tourmalet this year but it's the steeper side. You can split the ascent into three distinct sections. The easy lower slopes through the forest in the valley will shelter you from the sun and spare the legs, but passing through Gripp the gradient begins to bite, from here to the summit it will not drop below eight per cent. As you reach the resort of La Mongie you enter the tundra, now you'll be exposed to whatever nature has in store, with nowhere to hide. Whether it's blazing sunshine, pelting rain or a freak snow shower, you are in real hostile territory. Consumed by fatigue, the final bends will have you begging for the summit, which sits on a knife edge between a couple of cafes and souvenir shops in the clouds. Don't forget the obligatory photo next to the giant statue, before plummeting down the other side.

Length: 17.1km

Height gained: 1,255m

Average gradient: 7.3m

CW rating

9

5 Col de la Core

Ariège, Pyrenees

Features on stage 12

A beautiful forest-covered climb, which is always welcome as it will protect you from either the burning sun or the pouring rain, both of which you can face on the same day in the high mountains. The overall average of the ascent of this side is only five per cent which makes you wonder why the organisers gave it a category-one rating. The answer lies along its route where there are several surprises, including a few stiff eight per cent stretches to make you sweat. At 14km long, it's hardly a short effort, either. One of these hard ramps comes right at the start, to elevate the heart rate from the off, which is just what you don't need but it does ease

once you reach a small village. With five kilometres covered, from here on there's no more easy climbing and the closer to the top the tougher it becomes as the road breaks free of the forest to enter the final bends, surrounded by tall, grassy banks which are just a joy to ride.

Length: 14.1km

Height gained: 811m

Average gradient: 5.7m

CW rating

7

6 Plateau de Beille

Ariège, Pyrenees

Features on stage 12

They say the Pyrenean climbs are tougher than the Alps and that's because they are on average at least one to two per cent steeper. But what is one per

cent you might ask; well, one per cent over 15km makes far more difference than you would expect. Personally I find I can climb all day long on a seven per cent slope, I can fight an eight per cent gradient but an average of nine per cent? Well then it's painful. This might have something to do with my refusal to fit a compact chainset or that is just where my limit lies. Faced with this ascent, 15.8 kilometres set on an average of 7.9 per cent, I knew I would be borderline comfortable however the 7.9 per cent average is actually quite misleading as hidden along its course there are a number of sections that run close to the 10 per cent mark. These punishing ramps will drag you from whatever comfort zone





The Télégraphe is the perfect introduction to the art of suffering

Gone but not forgotten

Tour organisers announced last week that stage 20 of this year's Tour would have to skip these two due to a landslide (see page 12-13).

Col du Télégraphe

The Télégraphe is Robin to the Galibier's Batman. The two are inseparable as you can only truly ride the Galibier by first crossing the Télégraphe. Yes you can climb from the top of the Col du Lauteret, but why? Why take just a slice of the pie when you could eat the whole thing?

The first mountain I ever climbed and still one of my favourites, the Télégraphe is the perfect introduction to the art of vertical suffering. Its sublime 12km of swirling bends are set on a perfectly manageable seven per cent slope allowing you to emulate your heroes and spin your gear in and out of the multitude of corners. It does touch 10 per cent here and there, then it eases off to let you settle back into your metronomic rhythm.

Never forget to cast your eyes down over the view, nowhere is the gain in altitude from flat valley floor to high in the mountains better visualised, as you soar like an eagle (OK, I'm getting carried away, you will in fact be suffering like a dog), before dropping down into Valloire to begin the one and only Galibier.

Col du Galibier

The Galibier stands a giant among giants. Yes, there are higher passes and steeper passes, but its massive length, the fact that you will have just crossed The Col du Télégraphe before you arrive make this ascent truly epic. Rising out of Valloire, the first few kilometres are a comparative breeze while you trace the path of the river under the gaze of the towering banks of scree to your right. Then all hell breaks loose, as you double back on yourself and head skyward. The first couple of times I rode the Marmotte I had a rule that I'd not use my lowest sprocket until I reached this point.

As the climb steepens, you head into the high Alpine wilderness as the contoured road twists its course across the barren tundra.

Don't think of the top, just stay in the moment and keep pedalling beneath the snow-capped peaks that line this amphitheatre of endless toil. Round and up and round and then you catch sight of the summit and one of the toughest final kilometres of any mountain.

Touching close to 20 per cent in places it can have even the strongest riders on their knees as they force up through the permanently snow-covered banks to the battered summit in the clouds.

you may have found and throw you deep into the pain cave. Once the slope backs off you can crawl out, gather yourself, restore your composure just in time to be tossed in once more. In and out you will go until you break free of the forest and reach the sign that signals the official entrance to the plateau, although it's not the top, you are not even close. There is a large clearing to cross, where you'll be tempted to engage the big ring but be warned there is plenty more climbing to be had before you finally reach a rich expanse of tarmac, the custom-built finish area high up in the mountains.

Length: 15.8km

Height gained: 1,235m

Average gradient: 7.9%

CW rating

9

7 Côte de la Croix Neuve

Lozère, Massif Central

Features on stage 14

Television has the knack of deceiving viewers as to actually how steep a climb really is, so when, like this one, it actually looks steep on the screen, then you know you're in for some punishment. Known also as the Montée Jalabert, after the supercharged French rider who won the stage the first time it was crossed, it may be only three kilometres long, but they are three kilometres that will seem like 30.

The one time I rode it, I attacked it right from the bottom, convinced I could place myself high on the Strava leaderboard. I'd spent the previous days riding giants such as Mont Ventoux. By comparison, this

is just three kilometres; a mere pimple, a short sprint. By the time I'd wrenched myself away from the town, with one of the three kilometres behind me I was done for, seeing stars, but I had no choice other than to press on. Averaging 11 per cent with multiple stretches over 20 per cent, this is akin to a classic British hill-climb, just twice the length. There really is no let-up, no rest. I realised I'd made a huge mistake to start so hard but I wanted that crown. So be warned, although it may be a sprint when compared to the other giants on the race it requires a marathon of an effort if you decide to ride it all at full gas.

Length: 3km

Height gained: 303m

Average gradient: 10.1%

CW rating

9

8 Col d'Allos

Alpes-de-Haute-Provence

Features on stage 17

The Col d'Allos is an awesomely wild road. Unfortunately, the Tour doesn't climb its wildest side this year, but this side is still over 30km long so it does qualify as epic. The difference between the giant southern passes of the Alps and those in the north is distinct — these are very quiet, lonely roads. There are times when you could imagine you are the only man alive as you toil in the heat up the twisting slopes which seem like an organic part of the mountains. How steep or long this climb is seems irrelevant for the majority of its course.

What is so compelling is the sheer lack of human activity — it is a harsh, primeval landscape which contrasted against the carnival of the Tour will make a stunning spectacle. While the Tour doesn't climb the wildest side of this pass this year, it does descend it. And what a frightening descent it is. You cannot lose concentration for a second as it will lead to almost certain death. So contorted and perilous is its passage from the summit that I had to stop at one point just to regain my composure, so be warned; stay alert and take care.

Length: 14km

Height gained: 800m

Average gradient: 5.5%

CW rating

8

9 Pra Loup

Alpes-de-Haute-Provence

Features on stage 17

Nothing on the climb up to Pra Loop will challenge you gradient-wise. There are a couple of 10 per cent stretches but they are short; most of the climb hovers around the six per cent mark, which will have the pros attacking it in the big ring. This is as easy a summit finish as you will find, so tame are its slopes that you could ride them all day long, but as we all know any climb is hard if you attack it full gas. Uniformly steep and as wide as a motorway, the first five kilometres, winding through four giant bends are set on an impossibly smooth and well-maintained road — it truly is a joy to experience. The best way to ride it is to pump your tyres up to 120psi, empty any excess water in your bottles and give it hell, time trial it from bottom to top. When you reach Pra Loup, negotiate the one-way system, loop back out of town and enjoy the breathtaking descent to the

bottom to do it all over again.

Length: 6.2km

Height gained: 406m

Average gradient: 6.5%

CW rating

7

10 Lacets de Montvernier

Savoie, Alps

Features on stage 18

A few years ago a trend started in the Vuelta and has now spread to the other Grand Tours: the practice of sneaking in a viciously steep but short climb at the end of a stage. Sometimes on cobbles, usually twisting through the back streets of a hilltop town, they can add flair to an otherwise mundane stage and create a spectacle for the fans. The Tour it seems has now found a 'novelty' climb to blow all others out of the water. Spectacular on paper, it doesn't disappoint in reality; there are very few places on Earth where you'll find this many bends cramped into this short a space, it's tarmac spaghetti. Now I mean no disservice by calling it novelty, it's no giant Col but as you hit the first ramps any notion of fun vanishes. The first 200 metres are proper hard, the hardest of the whole climb, it will push you close to that imaginary red line but how close is up to you of course. Then you are into the bends. I liken it to an Alpine criterium. You hit each corner, push through, then race to the next and repeat. They hit you with such frequency that it just becomes effort, recover, effort, recover, until you pass the chapel for the finale across a wild meadow and roll into Montvernier.

Length: 3.4km

Height gained: 277m

Average gradient: 8.2%

CW rating

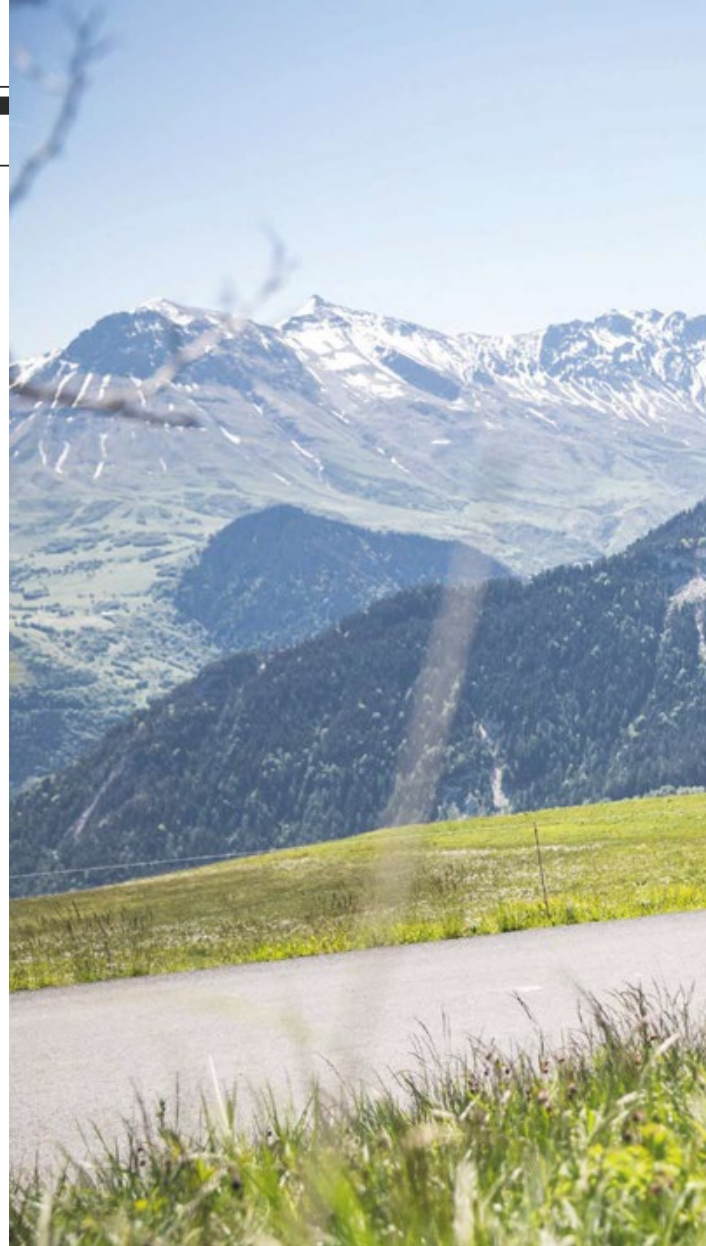
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11 Glandon/Croix de Fer

Savoie, Alps

Features on stages 18/19/20

The Col du Glandon and the Col de la Croix de Fer are essentially the same mountain. Well, sort of. Let me try to explain. On stage 18, the race crosses this pass from the west via Allemont. This is a mixed bag of a climb. It starts pretty hard with a twisty descent at about half distance followed by a leg-breaking ramp. Further on — and especially as it hones in on the summit — it's really a breeze to climb. Then you reach a



The Col du Tourmalet:
not for the faint-hearted



La Toussuire: Froome's favourite climb. Probably.

junction where you have two options, turn left to cross the peak of the Glandon, or carry straight on for the final kilometre to summit the Croix de Fer. In the case of Stage 18 the race banks left to cross the Glandon. On stage 19 the same peak is attacked from the east, from Saint-Rémy de Maurienne. This is the harder side with an average gradient a full two per cent tougher than the western side. What really makes it harder though, is the final kilometre to the Glandon summit. It's a vicious end to the climb through contorted bends so be warned. However, on stage 19 it isn't the end as the riders will roll over the Glandon summit then climb once again, a final kilometre to this time cross the top of the Croix de Fer. There's nothing really steep here, just another 100 metres of altitude to gain.

That's not the last time we'll see this summit, either. Thanks to damage in the Chabron Tunnel on the descent of the Col du Lautaret, and the added risk of a massive landslide, the race organisers have had no choice but to alter the route for stage 20. Gone are my favourites, the Col du Télégraphe and what would have been the high point of this year's Tour, the Col du Galibier. Instead the race will once more tackle the Croix de Fer this time climbing the third route up there. This route starts the same way the climb up

to La Toussuire starts, up the punishing, unforgiving, slopes of the D926 out of Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne. This is a claustrophobic road with tunnels, bridges and imposing bare rock faces. Last time I was there it was rough, convoluted and dirty, with kilometres set at over a 10 per cent average! All that thankfully changes when you reach Saint-Sortin-d'Arves. From here it's magic. All set on a seven per cent plus average but passing through nice, glorious hairpins bends and, behind you, what is my favourite view in the whole of the Savoie. Trust me, it's out of this world.

Length: 22.4km

Height gained: 1,562m

Average gradient: 6.9m

12 La Toussuire

Savoie, Alps

Features on stage nine

La Toussuire will forever be associated with the time Chris Froome dropped — some say attacked — Bradley Wiggins against team orders, heading off up the road only to be called back. From the base in Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne it's a real slog to begin with, the road is straight, wide and steep, you ride as if stuck in treacle longing for it to finish, or to deviate from its path, just a little. Up past an imposing and unsightly quarry it seems an age before this purgatory ends

and you leave the main road to head into the mountains. Once you turn, the scenery instantly changes and you're sweeping through idyllic agricultural Alpine villages beneath the stunning jagged peaks around you. Rolling up on the slope that fluctuates between six and seven per cent and just at the point where you expect Heidi and Peter to come running down a hillside the utopia is shattered by the sight of the towering apartment blocks of Le Corbier. Carbuncles in paradise, they dominate the landscape but also give you a target to aim for and as you approach the climbing gets tougher, hitting eight per cent into and out of the town. Leaving Le Corbier there is just the run to the finish left, a lessening of the slope then a short ramp to the line and into La Toussuire.

Length: 18km

Height gained: 1,095m

Average gradient: 6.1m

CW rating

8

13 Alpe d'Huez

Isère, France

Features on stage 20

The mountain every cyclist must climb once, its famous 21 bends, each numbered with a plaque, have seen some of the Tour's greatest battles. The key with 'The Alpe' is to survive bends one through five and reach La Garde without blowing a gasket and trust me, it's not easy.

The moment you sweep onto its slopes you'll want to be Marco Pantani and go on the attack. Filled with euphoria you'll race upwards only to find by the time you reach the first bend that you've run out of gears and have slowed to a crawl. So start steady, then after La Garde you can lift the pace as the slope relents.

Enjoy sweeping through the bends, some of which plateau significantly allowing you a rest and the chance to take in the views over the valley. With 4km to go the scenery opens and you can see Alpe d'Huez above. While you are now in touching distance, the journey through the final four corners is torturous. If you hammer yourself up the ramp into the resort because you think this is the top, it's not. You must first pass through the cafes, bank left under the bridge, and keep following the signs to the official finish out the back of the town; only then will you have conquered Alpe d'Huez.

Length: 13.8km

Height gained: 1,124m

Average gradient: 8.1m

CW rating

9

The cobble are back

For the second year running, this year's Tour will feature Northern France's famous pavé; we preview the route and look at the cobbles' enduring appeal

Richard Abraham

The cobbles in the Tour de France are a bike rider's Marmite. They either love them or they hate them. But us bike fans just can't get enough, and this year they're back. After what was unanimously considered one of the best stages of last year's Tour, the organisers of the race have once again chucked another 13.3km of the most hellish of Northern France's stoney farm tracks into the race for 2015.

Pneumatic drills, washing machines, blenders; people come up with all sorts of ways of describing what it's like to ride the cobbles but the truth is that nothing ever comes close to doing the experience justice. The task of forcing a thoroughbred race bike over a bunch of enormous stones rising up out of the earth like loaves of bread is enough to reduce even the mightiest riders to minnows. Equally a rider with strength, skill and a good dose of luck can emerge from the chaos a man transformed. Just look at Vincenzo Nibali; the Italian honoured the yellow jersey on his shoulders with a stoic and somewhat unexpected performance last summer. When he rode into Wallers-Arenberg, his arm-warmers dangling around his elbows, he had become a different rider, a bigger rider. A real Tour winner.

You won't be surprised when we say that a Tour stage on the cobbles is something to behold. Standing in the turnip fields you can almost feel the vibrations of the riders, cars and motorbikes through the soil before you even see them. It's not like standing on the side of a tarmac road and watching a smooth peloton whoosh past; here the riders come in dribs and drabs and they're going slow enough (and

close enough) that you can see the whites of their eyes, which in most instances are in fact bloodshot red with the dust and the effort. Climatologists will tell you that statistically it's more likely to rain in that part of France during a Tour stage than in April's Classic, too.

But then a cobbled stage of the Tour is nothing like Paris-Roubaix. Rather than a field chock-a-block with Classics specialists champing at the bit for muddy glory in the Roubaix velodrome, the peloton on the start line in Seraing on July 8 will be a very different bunch. A dozen will have ambitions of winning the stage, a dozen more will have ambitions of losing as little time to their GC rivals as possible, and the rest will have ambitions of just making it to the warm shower on the team bus at the end of the day with their bikes and their bodies intact.

Only three of the sectors themselves featured in Paris-Roubaix earlier this year, and even then they were run in reverse. Vincenzo Nibali's trainer Paolo Slongo said last year that his man put out more power, and expended more calories, on the cobbled stage five than he would over five or six hours in the mountains. This year's sectors are even more undulating and physically battering. Technicality will count for little; this stage will be about brute force.

Grey and gritty

That fifth stage in 2014 didn't win Nibali the Tour, but it certainly lost it for Chris Froome, who crashed out on the greasy roads before the first *secteur pavé* had even begun. Besides the obvious spectacle of

“Technicality will count for little; this stage will be about brute force”



Nibali is the most cobbler canny of the four favourites

the Tour de France hurtling across the farm tracks in a grey and gritty part of France, organisers throw the cobbles into the race because something always happens on a stage with them in. In 2010, the previous time the Tour headed over the pavé before 2014, Frank Schleck's collarbone picked a battle with a lump of granite near Sars-et-Rosières, came second, and that was that for the Luxembourgish rider's race. His brother Andy meanwhile was cowering in the lee of the man mountain that is Fabian Cancellara and somehow, incredibly given his spindly frame, ended up in the top 10 on the day (to set up a Tour that he would ultimately, after Alberto Contador's suspension, go on to win).

The time before that, in 2004, Iban Mayo lost almost four minutes over just two sectors. Former Aussie rider Matt Lloyd reportedly coined the phrase 'bleeding carrots' to describe what he saw as the crash-prone former Euskaltel-Euskadi squad, who wore bright orange. Watching skinny Basque climbers face up to the stones on the way down to their natural terrain of the Pyrenees was the modern day equivalent of the Romans throwing prisoners to the lions. Nine times out of 10, the lion won. ▶

Then there was the fifth stage in 1980 when Bernard Hinault did what Bernard Hinault tended to do in the prime of his career. He moaned about the stage, went along anyway, pulverized his opposition in abysmal conditions and wrecked his body in the process. That year he ruined his knee and abandoned the race a few days later while in the yellow jersey. Those cobbles on stages five and six were all that got in the way of Hinault winning five consecutive Tours between 1978 and 1982.

A Grand Tour Classic

The stage this year is a gargantuan 223.5 kilometres, almost as long as an actual Classic. In fact it's only 30km short of the distance of Paris-

"The stage is only 30km short of the distance of Paris-Roubaix"

Roubaix, although features only around a quarter of the number of cobbled kilometres covered in the Monument.

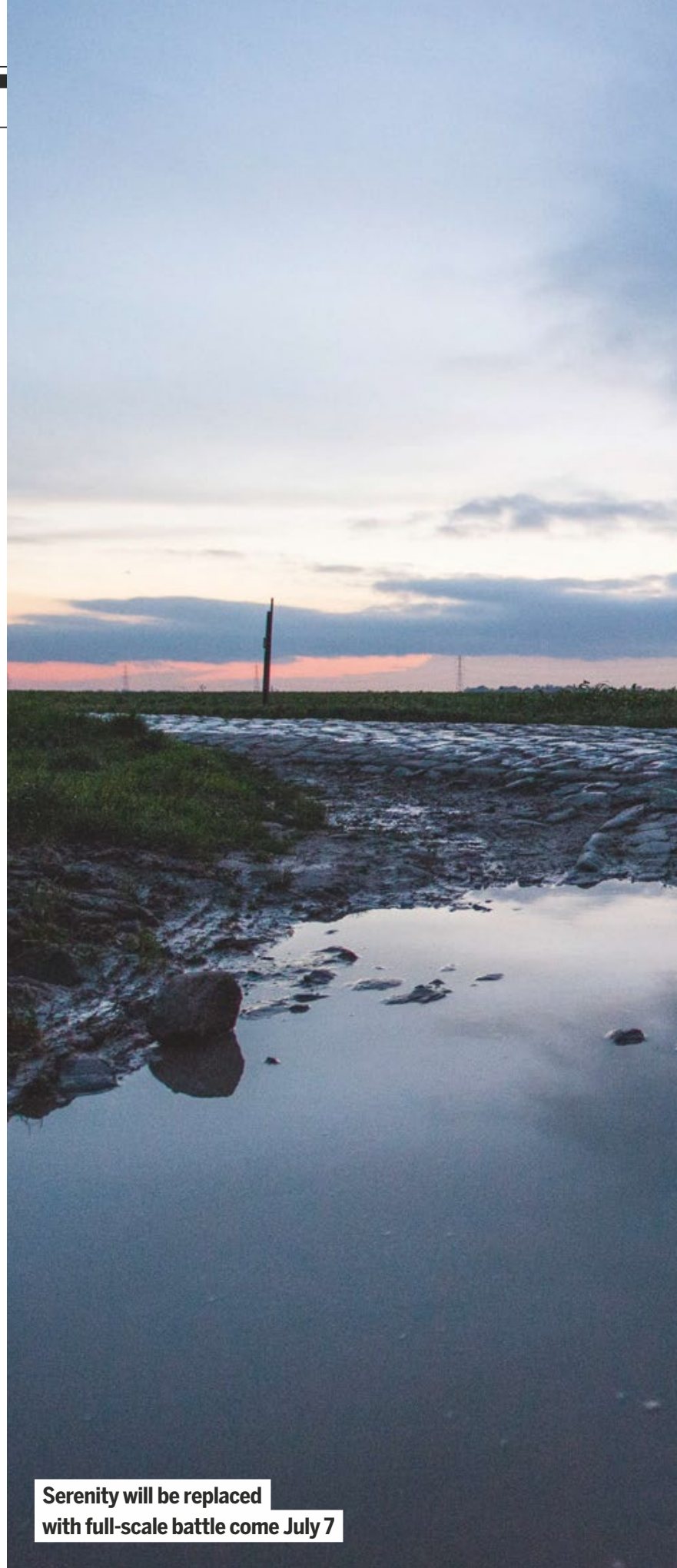
Chris Froome will be hoping that the likes of Ian Stannard and Geraint Thomas will be able to shepherd him to Cambrai this year in one piece. The same

goes for Alberto Contador, who should have Peter Sagan keeping an eye out for him. Vincenzo Nibali, meanwhile, might be licking his lips at a repeat performance (as will his new Astana team-mate and last year's stage winner, Lars Boom). Featherweight Colombian Nairo Quintana, who isn't blessed with natural cobble-riding genes, rode Dwars Door Vlaanderen and E3-Harelbeke earlier this season in preparation for the Tour and lived to tell the tale. The 58kg climber is a good 20kg lighter than a Classics specialist but turns out to be a remarkably resilient rider.

To be a Tour de France winner you have to be capable of riding on the cobbles, but these roads can throw up almost anything. The best form, the best bike handling and the best equipment can count for nothing if the cobbles deal you one moment of bad luck. Whether it's an overall contender crashing out, a nail-biting battle for survival, or a new Tour hero emerging from the dust in Cambrai, something big is going to happen on stage four. We can't wait to find out what.

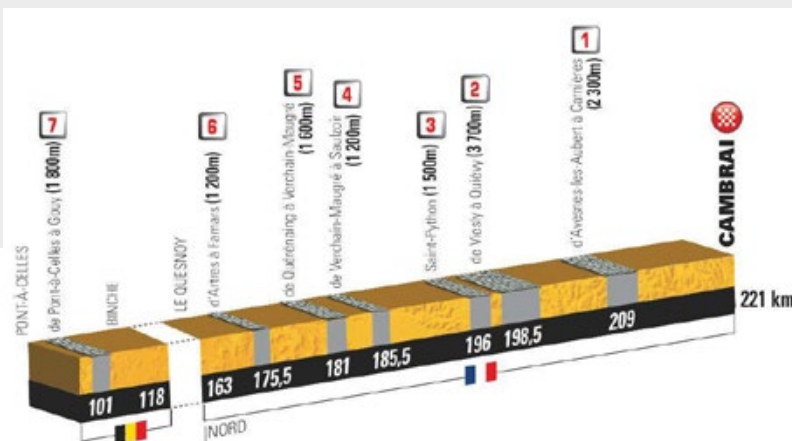


The Lotto-Jumbo team reconnoitre the Tour pavé



Serenity will be replaced with full-scale battle come July 7

Stage 4, Seraing/Cambrai



Pont-à-Celles to Gouy-lez-Piéton
1,800m
14:26

They might be in Belgium but these cobbles have a distinctly French flavour. By that we mean they are in a terrible state: a lovely appetiser to shake up the bunch.

Artres to Famars
1,200m
16:07

Nothing too testing here, in relative terms. However, riders will have to be on their guard as it's a long way to chase back on if you get dropped here. Expect lead-outs into the cobbles.



Where to watch?

Thinking of hopping across the Channel to watch the cobbled stage? Here are *CW*'s picks for some of the prime viewing spots.

Valenciennes

Watch the race at sector six near Famars, just south of the town, and then go and ride your bike over the cobbles used in Paris-Roubaix. The Arenberg Forest is just up the road — little yellow arrows with the letters 'PR' mark the race route on the road.

Fontaine au Tertre

The longest sector of cobbles in the Tour — 3.7km — features some high embankments that will make prime viewing spots. The cobbles are heavy going — long and hilly — so expect to see some real action. Just down the road in Troisvilles is the Café Chez Françoise, home to a cobble-loving landlady who is a fountain of Paris-Roubaix knowledge.

Carnières

Watch the riders at the end of the final sector seven, bleary eyed and cream cracked after more than 200km in the saddle. There's a nice tree-lined finish to the cobbled sector that will make a great photo opportunity, if you can take your eyes off the race.

Cambrai

Soak up the Tour atmosphere and catch the riders roll across the line in this stately old town before wandering over to the team buses to get a good look at what 223.5km and 13.3km of cobbles can do to man and machine.

Quérénaing to Verchain Maugré 1,600m 16:14

Now the cobbles start to get more tricky. This exposed sector features some nasty sections where the stones give way to muddy puddles.

Verchain-Maugré à Saulzoir 1,200m 16:20

The final of three sectors in quick succession with less than an hour of racing to go, this one is going to hurt.

St Python 1,500m 16:34

It might be relatively short but it climbs out of the village of St Python — riders enter at lower speeds and will feel every cobble as they ascend up to a ridge.

Fontaine au Tertre to Quiévy 3,700m 16:38

The longest sector in the race takes the race downhill at speed before turning abruptly left and heading back uphill. A perfect place for stage winners to launch their attack.

Avesnes-les-Aubert to Carnières 2,300m 16:52

A high speed run-in around a roundabout is followed by a lane that ducks and dives, twists and turns. If it isn't split to pieces already, this is where gaps will form.



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Customised caps for all

Counting two world champions among its customers, Kapz Guru, purveyor of customised headset top caps, has come a long way in the three years since it launched

Words: Oliver Bridgewood
Photos: Daniel Gould

Building a business out of top caps for headsets may not sound like it has much potential, but when Sir Bradley Wiggins places an order it's clear there's more to it than meets the eye. Somerset-based company Kapz Guru has been making customised bits for bikes in the UK since 2012, launching as the British cycling boom first started to take off.

Owner Khush Jabble came up with the idea after getting his name engraved on his own headset top cap. After constantly saying to his wife Sam that he would start his own company in the belief that others would want personalised accessories too, Jabble finally took the plunge in October 2012. At the time it was just him, Sam, his garage and an idea.

In the three years since, Kapz Guru has become a cottage industry success story, and throughout this time Jabble has stuck to the promise that every part of every product would come from the UK, and be made by him

with machinery customised especially for Kapz. In fact, he doesn't understand why anyone would want to manufacture abroad when it is possible to make quality products in the UK.

Cycling Weekly paid Jabble a visit to find out more.

Cycling Weekly: As customers go, Sir Bradley Wiggins is a pretty good one!

Khush Jabble: He was actually one of our first customers; he bought six mod roundels. He placed the order online at some ridiculous time in the morning. If

you look at his bikes, they are always on there. In last year's Paris-Roubaix he used one of our Kapz with a union flag on. Another customer actually complained, saying their cap wasn't fit for purpose and the alloy bolt wasn't good enough. So I sent him a picture of Wiggins using it at Paris-Roubaix.

CW: Any other famous customers?

KG: Michael Kwiatkowski. A week after winning the World Championships he ordered two Kapz from us, a Polish dragon, which we engraved, and a world champion's rainbow stripes cap





“As people have seen more examples on Facebook and Instagram they realise they can have anything they want”

— nothing too wacky. He tweeted them, and he paid too!

CW: What are the most popular things to have on a top cap?

KG: Originally it tended to be flags, but as people have seen more examples on Facebook and Instagram they have come to realise they can have anything they want. Often that is a message. Maybe they are doing a specific ride or one of their mates is injured. ‘Shut up legs’ is very popular, as is ‘pedal faster FFS’. The Captain Scarlet symbol has been popular too.

CW: Why do you think this kind of product appeals?

KG: Why do you have a specific iPhone case? It’s personal to you. Maybe you have a specific memory or loved one you want to remember? We did a cap for a guy in Belgium who added me on Facebook and he lost his dog. He had bought some caps from us, so I downloaded a Facebook picture of his dog and made him a cap. He was over the moon. He has his dog on his bike and it makes him feel good.

CW: Is everything made in the UK?

KG: The caps and bolts are made in Scotland, the full colour caps have a special coating which is done five miles down the road and the printing of the Kapz and bottles is done here. The engraving is done in Kent, the laser etching is done in Hertfordshire and anodising is done in Manchester. The bottles are made in Holland.

CW: Have you always been a cyclist?

KG: As a kid I always cycled and I spent a lot of time on my own cycling. I was an apprentice engineer at 16 and one of the things we did was build and race pedal cars with Royce, the hub makers. We actually won the prize for the most

innovative design. It was beautiful, it was all 531 tubing — we were rubbish, but the car was fantastic! I think we came 12th out of 20-odd teams but we had the prettiest machine!

CW: Are your bikes bling too?

KG: I’ve got a Look 795 and I’ve also got an old Peugeot 753 that I bought in 1987 from new — it’s a beautiful piece of engineering. It has a quill stem. When I first started working my first pay cheque was all about this bike. I ride it when it’s sunny, because it is so comfortable. It is a little bendy, but I love it.

The early years

From a young age Khush Jabble has been involved in cycling. “I’ve always cycled, I can even remember learning to ride at like the age of four or something ridiculous,” he says.

“The earliest picture I’ve got of me on a bike is when I was at school. There was a competition for the best-decorated bike, so mum and me decorated the bike with tin foil and everything you can think of.

“I was never in a club, but being on a bike and building bikes was my passion. For example I’m a Campag certified engineer — I did all the training myself.”



Khush takes time out to admire his 80s Peugeot

Jim McFarlane: the man behind Endura

Nick Bull meets the man who turned his small Scottish clothing brand into an international success story

Words: Nick Bull Photos: Andrew McCandlish, Graham Watson, Daniel Gould

Livingston, Scotland. It's a windy, slightly wet day. Some hills are visible in the distance, others are obscured by clouds. Away from the town's designer outlet-dominated centre, there's plenty of greenery on show.

"We were known as the Scottish, mountain bike, s**t-weather clothing company," jokes Jim McFarlane. Given the vistas on offer from Endura headquarters in the aforementioned town, it's not hard to see why.

The ambitious Scot is the driving force behind the Scottish clothing company, which started in 1992

with an off-road focus, yet now has a reputation for selling high quality products across cycling's various disciplines.

"We can't compete with the older brands on heritage — that's not something you can make up," he says. "We're best-known for our off-road range here in the UK, and we didn't have that legacy or reputation in the markets we've entered into, and are entering into."

"We have to have better products in comparison with the long-standing products and ranges."

To do that, Endura operates out



of a 56,000sq ft office, which sits almost equidistant from Glasgow (to the west) and Edinburgh (the east).

The company has become a modern-day success story; in the year to April 2014, it generated £24m in revenue globally. It was a winner in the 2013/2014 HSBC Global Connections Awards for small and medium-sized businesses, and private equity company Penta Capital invested a minority share in the company last October.

Endura has distributors across Europe, South America, Russia, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and China, but it still has its original identity at heart. As its tag-line says, its products are born in Scotland but ridden around the world.

"We've got around 130 staff working here," says McFarlane. "We've got 25 or so in the States, another 25 in Europe and around that figure at our quality control centre in Shanghai."

Would he be tempted to move the entire production side of the business away from Livingston?

"Making things in the UK is really important to us. It keeps us closely connected to our products," he replies.

Anything from its top-of-the-range products to its jerseys clad in the logos of local whisky brands are made on site, and work to expand its already sizeable warehouse has been completed since *CW* visited. There's visible momentum within the company.

No racer

McFarlane has no illusions about how good he was as a rider. "I was rubbish," he says, pointing out his best 10-mile time was "in the high 23 minutes" and that his shape rendered him "useless at going up hills". (Nonetheless, he was still a member of the popular Denny and Royal Albert cycling clubs).

However, his business instincts were far superior: his search for good quality kit during a 14-month stint living in Sydney, Australia, left him cold, and upon his return to the UK he decided to do something about it.

"Mountain biking was the big opportunity at the time," he says. "Although time trialling and road racing were what I was more involved with, the off-road scene was changing.

"There was a lot of innovation on the bikes, but the big brands in clothing hadn't responded."

Endura's first offering was the MT500 range, which, with its mountain bike-specific products, is still going strong.

In recent years, it is the company's involvement in road racing that has significantly boosted its profile. This was kick-started through its eponymous road racing squad, which was launched in 2008 and became a UCI-ranked team between 2009 and 2012. After modest initial success, Frenchman Alex Blain won the 2011 Tour of Normandy and current Cannondale-Garmin pro Jack Bauer took the team's biggest win at that point, a stage in that year's Tour of Utah.

"Originally, it was about us having a product test platform that gave feedback immediately," says McFarlane. "So we saw the opportunity to establish a vehicle to show we were serious about road cycling and its clothing products."

Then came 2012, in which new recruits Russell Downing, Jonathan

Tiernan-Locke and Zak Dempster helped the team become dominant at home and successful abroad. It came at a cost, however: the team's budget was reportedly £1m, around double that of their rivals.

"We got sucked in, perhaps, and maybe we spent too much, but it was an intense period for us," McFarlane says, before addressing Tiernan-Locke's subsequent fall from grace. "Endura Racing got to where it got to; it was an incredibly strong team, regardless of whether you take away certain results given recent developments.

"There wasn't any chance of us going further than that, but we wanted to have the possibility of getting wild-card invites for the Grand Tours."

A merger with the second-division German squad NetApp, who had been invited to the 2012 Giro d'Italia and performed modestly in it, gave Endura

Nairo Quintana clad in Endura shorts at the Giro



Staying ahead

Despite Endura's competitive prices, the increased popularity of cycling has made the cycling clothing market a busy marketplace.

"It's like the new golf, if you like," said Jim McFarlane, "which has given us an opportunity to get products out there using new technology.

"But if you take something like the waterproof hi-vis jacket, it has become a large-selling product in recent years, and [discount retailers such as] Lidl and Aldi have started selling them.

"That's where it becomes an uneconomic area for us to get involved in. It becomes commoditised. However, that's healthy for us: new entrants into the market mean we can't be complacent. We just have to be better."



Endura made Alex Dowsett's
Hour record skinsuit

“It’s exciting to see products we’ve designed for the likes of Alex end up available to customers”

that vehicle. The partnership lasted for two years, in which time Czech rider Leopold König placed seventh in last year’s Tour de France, and won a stage of the 2013 Vuelta in the company’s kit.

“Ultimately, that got us [as far as] it could take us,” added McFarlane. “We weren’t going to win the Tour, so again we couldn’t have gone further.”

Grand Tour kit

The team — now rebranded as Bora-Argon 18 — has re-established itself as a largely German outfit; nonetheless, Endura still has a sizeable presence in the pro peloton thanks to a partnership with Movistar that began last year.

McFarlane adds: “We wanted to be the brand — not the team — that helps riders obtain Grand Tour success.

“When you get to WorldTour level, there’s a level of expectation. The team are a driving force for us; they keep putting the pressure on.”

Nairo Quintana won last year’s Giro d’Italia in Endura kit, and Alex Dowsett’s successful World Hour record came after the company made and wind-tunnel-tested 57 skinsuit prototypes for him.

“People working here enjoy that challenge, the desire to continuously make improvements,” McFarlane says.

“It’s exciting to see that products we’ve initially designed for riders like Nairo and Alex end up available for customer sale.”

(Endura’s aerodynamic WT Aerosuits and speedsuits, as well as its WT Classics range, which can be purchased by customers, are what the professionals were wearing in 2014.)

There’s a sizeable noticeboard in the Endura offices that monitors how its affiliated teams and riders are getting on. It covers more than Movistar; the company is still the apparel sponsor of the Betch.nl Superior Brentjens mountain bike team and clothing partner of Chris Smith, the renowned British dirt jumper.

“If you look at the number of projects and collaborations we’ve got on at the minute, I think they’re credible,” says McFarlane.

“I think people want to work with us. What we’re delivering, and our pipeline of what we’re aiming for in the future is really exciting.

“We’re doing things I couldn’t have dreamed of 10 years ago because we’ve got the credibility and resources now. It’s a great place to work.” ■



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£29.99



Scott unveils new Foil all-rounder

Henry Robertshaw travels to Austria to check out the latest incarnation of Scott's wind-cheating race bike

It used to be the case that if you wanted to make sure your new machine grabbed the headlines, then building a bike that barely registered on the scales was the best way to go about it. But times change, and there's no avoiding the fact that while overall weight is still a major consideration when buying a bike, the latest big thing is aerodynamics.

Scott was among the first to produce a mass-market aero bike with the Foil. While early models were fast, they were also widely criticised for a harsh ride, something Scott's latest revision looks to have addressed, with the company's engineers looking to retain the aerodynamics and stiffness that give the Foil such a turn of speed, while adding comfort and removing weight.



Scott Foil: cutting-edge aero performer

Paul Remy, the designer who has dedicated the last two-and-a-half years of his life to the new Foil, claims that over 40km the new frame will save you six watts over its predecessor, with a 13 per cent increase in bottom bracket stiffness and a whopping 89 per cent increase in vertical compliance.

We're not sure how Scott has arrived at the 89 per cent figure, but any tangible improvement to the Foil's comfort can be attributed to the incredibly thin seat stays, the reduced cross-section of the seat tube and a flat top tube that is pushing at the edge of UCI's 3:1 rule on tube ratios.

One-piece cockpit

Unsurprisingly the main aerodynamic improvements are at the front end, which Remy says is responsible for up to 54 per cent of the bike's total drag, with the head tube being narrowed and the fork crown being brought closer to the down tube.

But arguably the biggest talking point is the integrated stem/bar combo — a similar set-up to the Aerocockpit found



Integrated bar and stem is a cutting-edge touch



“The new frame will save you six watts over its predecessor”

on the top-end versions of Canyon's Aeroad. This design features flattened tops and an integrated Di2 junction box. Aerodynamic spacers will also be available to buy separately.

Custom carbon

Scott also claims to have improved stiffness at both the front and rear ends, which should translate into improved power transfer and handling. The bottom bracket has been beefed up and the chainstays given a box profile, while it's a similar story at the front where the new bike has been given a 1 1/4in fork steerer.

Intricate work has also been undertaken with the carbon-fibre, with stronger fibres used at the tube junctions, and stiffer fibres elsewhere, with computer software being used to determine the best direction for the fibres to run at any given point.

Scott claims that the new Foil will weigh 945g for a 54cm frame — so hardly a featherweight, but not bad for an aero bike, and a not-insignificant 200g lighter than the new Specialized S-Works Venge.

The three models that come with Shimano Ultegra Di2, mechanical Ultegra and 105 will be available from October, while the Dura-Ace Di2 and Dura-Ace mechanical versions will follow in December. Pricing is yet to be announced.

OUR TAKE

We had a brief opportunity to put the Foil through its paces at Scott's press event in Austria and, on first impressions at least, found it to be very impressive, with rear-end comfort in particular greatly improved. We'll be interested to see whether it copes as well with rough British roads when we have one in for a full test in the autumn.

HOT STUFF



Knight 65 wheelset

Knight is up front about the fact that this medium depth 65 wheelset was delayed by three months when the prototypes didn't live up to expectations, and claims that the subsequent development has produced a pair of wheels that is faster than its competitors at all wind angles. We'll find out more in our aero wheels group test next month.

Contact: www.velobrands.co.uk

Price: £1,648

Test report: August

Compressport Full Socks V2

Compressport's Full Socks V2 offer the sciencey-sounding 'Veino-Muscular' compression technology.

We'll be finding out what that means in real terms during our upcoming compression kit group test.

Contact: www.madison.co.uk

Price: £29.99

Test report: August



Champion System custom kit

Custom kit is a big part of cycling and goes way beyond traditional club kits. Charity rides, small teams and one-offs are growing in popularity and manufacturers are meeting the demand. Our first print has landed from

Champion System, which sits within our group test of custom kit.

Contact:

www.champ-sys.com

Price: from £37

Test report: August



2 Power Meter pedals £1,199.99

If it's data you're after, then the second-generation Garmin Vector is the power meter for you. As well as power, left/right balance and cadence, they measure time out of the saddle, pedalling efficiency and even the exact spot on the pedal where your power is concentrated.

Hardware-wise, the pedal is the same as the original Vector, but the pods have been redesigned with LED status lights and a small bolt to make them even easier to transfer between bikes, especially when compared with power meters located elsewhere on your bike.

However, I found the pods to be a little flimsy, with the thin plastic around the bolt snapping after a couple of transfers. And with the PowerTap P1 power meter pedals ditching the pod and being £200 cheaper, they may well be a better option.

Henry Robertshaw

358g (two pedals and pods)
www.madison.co.uk



7



eKoi Excel Magnetic helmet £92.60

With no fewer than six base colours and 16 accent colour options, achieving the look you want with the eKoi Excel helmet shouldn't be too difficult. What's more, the helmet also comes with a plastic aero shell (also available in a choice of 11 designs) that clips onto the helmet when you need that aero advantage, but does seriously compromise on ventilation.

The dial at the rear of the helmet offers plenty of adjustment, but I still found it dug in at the front, leaving a mark on my forehead for hours after my ride. I would suggest that you try before you buy, but with eKoi only available direct, unfortunately this isn't an option. Henry Robertshaw

313g (with shell)
www.ekoi.fr

7

Northwave Light base layer £19.99

Northwave's Light appears to be something of a misnomer — our size medium test sample tipped the scales at 127g, which is more than many jerseys.

By way of comparison, the incredibly comfortable Santini Mesh base layer that we recently reviewed is almost half the weight at just 68g. The added weight is notable too, and the thick fabric made it quite sweaty for a summer undergarment. The fit is OK if a little loose in places, but comfort could be better — I found the polyester fabric a little coarse and irritating. Oliver Bridgewood

127g (Medium)
www.i-ride.co.uk



6



**Product
of the
week**

Vittoria Magic Mastik rim glue £11.95

Unlike traditional tub glue from the likes of Continental, just one layer of Magic Mastik applied to the rim is enough, with no need to coat the tyre. The two 12ml tubes provided act as applicators and make application extremely easy and mess-free. Once a layer is applied, all you need to do is pop the tub on, inflate it and then leave for 12 hours while the adhesive dries off. I did experience a little seepage, though this wiped clean easily and I haven't had any doubts about the strength of the bond, even during some aggressive crits. *Symon Lewis*

Size: 12ml (per tube)

www.chickencycles.co.uk

9



De Marchi Perfecta jersey £149.99

There's no getting away from the fact that £150 is a lot to spend on a short-sleeved jersey. However, if you're after an extremely comfortable and finely made jersey to make those special mid-summer rides just a little more memorable, then the De Marchi Perfecta is ideal. Handmade in Italy, the jersey has an ergonomic cut that fits close to the torso without being restrictive, along with a stretchy fabric across the chest and shoulders to prevent any wind flap. The lightweight polyester of the rest of the jersey is very breathable too. Four rear pockets (one of which is zipped) offer plenty of storage space and the very effective silicone grippers around the hem stop the jersey from riding up.

Paul Norman

173g (Medium)

www.vitaminac.net

9



Time Xpresso 15 pedals £370

Carbon and titanium bodies with ceramic bearings help keep the weight ridiculously low, at only 140 grams for the pair. They feel incredibly well made and the main body and axle have held up well to three months' of heavy use. The white footplate started to look worn, however, after only a few rides. The clipless action remains the same as the other Xpresso pedals in the range and so offers a good amount of float and feels secure underfoot. The cleats also remain flawed because of their tendency to wear through quickly. It's not a big issue, as they're cheap enough to replace, but supplying a better quality, lighter cleat would suit the high-end feel of these pedals.

Chris Catchpole

140g

www.extrauk.co.uk

7



Garmin Epix GPS watch £419.99

The Epix is impressive with its multitude of functions, although it's fair to say it is aimed more at the extreme adventurer or multi-sport athlete rather than your average road cyclist. It is worth spending some time to get familiar with the Epix's functionality as once accustomed, each cycling functions perform well. The 1.4in colour touchscreen is easy to use on the fly, GPS is picked up quickly, the battery life is good and it is comfortable to wear. In addition, the navigation features are reliable and you can link the Epix to your smartphone via Bluetooth (although there is no Wi-Fi connectivity). To get the most out of the Epix it is a good idea to purchase a Garmin heart rate strap and a bar mount. *Chris Hovenden*

85g www.madison.co.uk

8

LONG TERM TEST

24 months later

Giro Air Attack Shield 2014 (2015 version, £179.99)

Giro was one of the first to enter the aero road helmet market. Although I cannot confirm the aero benefits claimed by Giro, the Air Attack Shield is a good, versatile helmet that can be used in many conditions and events, from hot Sunday rides to cold early-season time trials.

Chris Hovenden

www.zyro.co.uk

9



Giro: multi-purpose lid

Can't live without

Bonk Neckwarmer £14.95

I found the Bonk Neckwarmer to be invaluable during the cold winter months. With a nice fleece lining and a white polyester outer layer, the Bonk Neckwarmer performed well and looked good. The above, combined with a competitive price, make this a good purchase for wintry weather.

Chris Hovenden

8



Keep your neck
warm with a Bonk

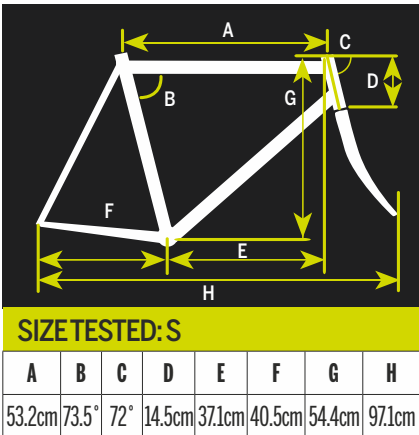
Liv Envie Advanced Pro 1

£3,699.99

Tested by: Louise Mahé | Miles ridden: 498 |
Size tested: 50cm | Weight: 7.81kg/17.2lb

Liv is the female-specific brand created by Taiwanese manufacturer Giant and, as the first women-specific bike with aerodynamics at the forefront

Liv Envie Advanced Pro 1	
£3,699.99	
Frame	10/10
Specification	9/10
Ride	10/10
Value	10/10
Distributor	www.giant-bicycles.com
Frame	Advanced Grade Composite
Fork	Pro-Spec, Advanced-Grade Composite, Full-Composite OverDrive 2 steerer
Size range	XS (46.5cm), S (50cm), M (52cm)
Weight	7.81kg / 17.2lb
Groupset	Ultegra Di2, 11-speed, Giant SpeedControl SL Ti brakes
Alterations	110mm stem
Gear ratios	11-28t, 50/34t
Wheels	Giant P-SLR1 Aero WheelSystem
Tyres	Giant P-SL1, Front and Rear specific, 700x23mm
Bar	Giant Contact SLR Aero
Stem	Giant Contact SL
Seatpost	Giant Vector Composite
Saddle	Fizik Arione Donna



of its design, the Envie is anything but a ‘shrink and pink’ job. Boasting a race-ready spec, the Envie Advance Pro 1 looks every inch a race-winning bike with its sleek AeroSystem shaped tubing, deep-section wheels and custom V-brakes all designed to reduce drag. Having riders like Marianne Vos and Pauline Ferrand-Prévot at its disposal to test the Envie, there’s no doubt that this frameset is fast.

Frame
Giant was relatively late to the market with its men’s aero frame, but has made up for this in 2013 by being the first to create a women-specific aero bike. With all the technology at its fingertips, it was only a matter of time before it turned its attention to women. Despite looking markedly similar to the men’s Giant Propel, the Liv Envie boasts female-specific geometry with a slightly shorter top tube and taller head tube. Liv has used the same AeroSystem shaping technology with advanced grade carbon composite

as it does for the Giant Propel range. Although it’s not Giant’s top of the range Advance SL carbon composite, reserved for the Propel SL frames, it still offers a great combination of low weight and high lateral stiffness.

The slippery shaped tubing is enhanced with neat aero-inspired details like brake caliper mounts that sit behind the fork blades and the aerofoil-shaped seat tube with built-in seatpost clamp.

Specification
Built up with Ultegra Di2, this is a step down from the

Dura-Ace-equipped steeds Vos and her team-mates ride. That said, the gap between the top-tier groupsets is shrinking and the seamless shifting is plenty good enough for national-level racing. The choice of a compact 50/34t chainset size gave a good range of gears with the 50x11 combination plenty high enough for keeping up when the big boys started drilling it on club runs, and the 34x28 was low enough to get us up the steeper climbs. Stronger women may need to upgrade this, though, and a mid-compact may have been a better option.





Aero seatmast to further cut drag



Compact Ultegra drivetrain

reliable braking. However, deep-section wheels aren't for all conditions or riders and having these as standard means you may want to invest in something a little shallower for training. The Envie is topped off with a female-specific Fizik Arione Donna saddle.

Ride

After switching to a longer stem, the handling of the Envie was spot-on. The Overdrive2 tapered head tube made for precise and responsive steering, giving confidence to really push it to the limits.

The combination of the stiff and responsive frame kitted out with aero specific finishing kit meant as soon as I got on the bike it felt fast. Getting up to speed felt easy when wanting to press on during efforts, while long, steady rides on it were comfortable and relaxed.

Value

A quick run through the spec sheet leaves you in no doubt as to where every penny of your hard-earned £3,699 goes. A frame of this quality kitted out with Ultegra Di2 and rolling on deep-section wheels means that few racers will be left with a shopping list of must-have competition add-ons.

Much of the finishing kit is Giant's own brand; from the bars and stem right down to the brakes, wheels and even the tyres. All of these parts exceeded my expectations, with the Giant Contact SLR aero bars standing out as particularly impressive. The narrow and compact design meant that getting tucked into an aero position felt natural and easy. My only grievance was the 80mm stem, as this made the bike a little nervous and twitchy — I swapped it for a 110mm version.

Giant's own Speed Control SL V-brakes are tucked away out of the wind to further

enhance the aerodynamics and gave great stopping power and modulation. The rear brake felt a little spongy on occasion — perhaps due to cabling — but this didn't affect overall stopping power.

In keeping with the overall aero styling, the 50mm deep-section Giant P-SLR 1 wheelset gave a stiff and responsive ride with no movement even when riding out of the saddle. Despite an aluminium braking surface, the wheels are as light as many carbon models — perfect for those wanting to race, but with the benefits of more predictable and

Verdict

This bike consistently impressed on everything from long, hilly training rides to circuit racing. Hardly surprising when you consider the Liv Envie frameset has been ridden to victory in the last two years' women's World Championship road races. Input from experienced female pros means the Liv's geometry is just right for women and allows you to get a perfect fit on a top-notch aero frameset. The high level spec means the

Liv's ready to race straight out of the box.

10

For

- Great handling
- Stiff and responsive
- Aerodynamically designed

Against

- Short stem gave twitchy feel
- Smaller or lighter riders may struggle on the deep section wheels
- Compact chainset may be too low-geared for some

Women's short-finger gloves

Hannah Bussey puts five pairs of track mitts through their paces

What

No cycling wardrobe is complete without a decent pair of short-finger gloves. They're also known as track mitts because in the velodrome, riders traditionally wore leather palmed, string-backed, short-finger gloves.

Why?

Track mitts are an item of protective cycling clothing, designed to help reduce hand fatigue, provide vibration damping and palm protection from road rash. Opting for fingerless gloves can mean a better fit (as finger length is no longer a concern) and enables you to maintain dexterity — giving you instant feedback of gearshifts and braking modulation.

How?

Fit and performance are high on the agenda. Generally women's hands are smaller than men's, so scaling down of gloves can be a manufacturing challenge. They have to have a tight enough fit to prevent friction blisters but ensure that the padding works well without impacting on handlebar grip. Cost is also a consideration; bargains still need to be fit for purpose, and high prices must be justified by high quality.

HOW WE SCORE

- 10 - Superb, best in its class and we couldn't fault it.
- 9 - Excellent, a slight change and it would be perfect
- 8 - Brilliant, we'd happily buy it
- 7 - Solid, but there's better out there
- 6 - Pretty good, but not quite hitting the mark
- 5 - OK, nothing wrong with it, but nothing special
- 4 - A few niggles let this down
- 3 - Disappointing
- 2 - Poor, approach with caution
- 1 - Terrible, do not buy this product

Mavic Cloud £19

Constructed using proven hardwearing Clarino fabric on the palm, this simple, tight-fitting race mitt proved both durable and comfortable throughout testing. Initial concerns over palm padding proved unfounded, with the foam in just the right places to reduce vibration and prevent numbness and grip calluses.

The reinforced thumb and forefinger 'L' limits the size of the nose-wipe, and my nose grew sore, as it kept catching the L-section edging. The Lycra top proved lightweight enough even when temperatures spiked at over 27°C. The finger construction was comfortable; I didn't suffer from any rubbing from seams between my ring and middle fingers. The Velcro strap ensured snug wrist closure, although it did catch and open occasionally when reaching into the back pocket.

A very reasonably priced pair of gloves and, with several colours to choose from, there should be a match for most of your cycling wardrobe.

www.mavic.co.uk

Weight
36
grams

8

Sugoi RC Pro £24.99

Made using five main panels, with mesh between the fingers, these structured mitts are close-fitting and well-ventilated. The stretch panels contoured my hands well and were one of two pairs that didn't rub the web of skin between my fore and ring fingers.

A combination of both raw cut finish and overlock sewn edges kept fabric bulk around the fingers minimal, and a soft, decently sized nose-wipe kept me sniff and drip-free throughout. Voluptuous padding at the base of the palm looked a little overkill, but in practice it provided a comfortable perch; combined with the sensibly sized padding at the top of the palm and tacky silicone details, grip on the bars was natural and secure.

The rubber-mounted Velcro closure allowed for a perfect fit around the wrist, but it did occasionally catch on my jersey when dipping into the back pocket for provisions. A slightly tighter fit and pull-on style would have made these perfect.

www.cyclingsportsgroup.co.uk

Weight
32
grams

8



Endura FS260 Aerogel II £26.99

Feature-wise, the FS260 had the most going on. We counted over six different kinds of fabric used just in the construction, plus silicone, gel and reflective detailing to boot. The glove upper is broken into three sections. A simple high-stretch Lycra is teamed with a lightweight mesh, giving a snug fit across the top of the hand. A towelling nose-wipe runs the length of the index finger — an unusual location that took a bit of getting used to. I was automatically wiping a thumb across my nose for the first hour or so of testing. A technically laid-out palm, comprising ventilated gel padding and silicone looked the business, but in practice proved too much for small hands to bear, and I couldn't grasp the bars as securely.

I also suffered with pinching and rubbing between my fore and ring fingers. The FS260 has a Velcro wrist closure, but this time a malleable fabric one — it didn't catch on my jersey fabric too often when reaching into back pockets.

Weight
38
grams

7

www.endurasport.com

Gore Power Lady £29.99

A snug-fitting pair of gloves with an extra pliable and ventilated palm with a two-section construction, and a central mesh channel. Using both foam and gel padding on the palm is effective, the latter definitely assisting in reducing the feeling of road buzz.

The upper is dominated by the largest nose-wipe on test, running the entire length of the forefinger and thumb. This did make my hands feel rather warm and gave a bulky feel.

Weight
40
grams

7

www.goreapparel.co.uk

Castelli Dolcissima W £30

Probably the best track mitt I've ever worn. Its minimalist design ticks every box on the wish list. Well-ventilated, thanks to a simple Lycra upper that's perforated multiple times, with mesh between fingers. The soft nose-wipe is plenty large enough — impressive, as there is also a reinforcement section between index finger and thumb.

Like Mavic, Castelli opted for the tried-and-tested Clarino palm, which, when combined with the individual finger and palm foam padding, makes for a very lightweight and low-profile glove. Raw fabric finishes and overlock sewing on finger edges, along with a pull-on design, gives a 'barely there' feel. Handlebar grip is flawless, and ferreting around for snacks in back pockets super-easy.

Less is most definitely more in this case. With such a simple construction and so few technical features, these are simple in the best way. Since they're the best, they're worth the extra cash.

Weight
22
grams

9

www.saddleback.co.uk



**BEST
ON TEST**

FITNESS

How do I... Make my own recovery and energy drink?

Find out how to use whole foods to create your own recovery and energy drinks with no junk involved

Vicky Ware

You can buy any number of different energy and recovery drink concoctions, but sometimes it's nice to know exactly what you're putting in your body, and why. It's possible to make your own energy and recovery drinks using natural ingredients.

Lentine Zahler is a chef who focuses on using real foods to fuel athletes. "When it comes to nutrition, and sports drinks, the best choices you can make are those where you're consuming whole, real and unprocessed ingredients," she says.

When it comes to a recovery drink she advises: "Stick to real food. My favourites are chocolate milk or iced coffee with milk, because they contain some sugar, some fat and protein — all the things your body needs to rebuild."

An energy drink could contain coconut water, honey, sea salt plus lemon or lime juice to flavour.

This provides the carbohydrate and

electrolytes found in most processed energy drinks, but with a refreshing flavour and no refined sugar. If you want even longer-lasting energy try adding branched-chain amino acids for a protein-based fuel — or even rice or soy proteins which contain these naturally.

Sports nutritionist Laurent Bannock advises whey protein as a recovery drink ingredient. "Whey protein is easy to use and can be added to a 'recovery' shake to provide fast digestion and rapidly available proteins and amino acids," he explains.

For a simple 'super shake' recipe he suggests adding oats and spinach to whey and blending as an easily digestible pre- or post-training drink.

An alternative to a dairy recovery drink could contain coconut milk, powdered oats and hemp protein.

Other dairy-free alternatives include almond and oat milks. Powdered oat provides carbohydrate and soluble fibre known to lower cholesterol.

Essential points

- Experiment to see what works for you
- Energy drinks need electrolytes
- Try vegan alternatives like pea protein
- All foods in moderation

Try different kinds of base liquid for recovery drinks to see what works for you. Milk is a classic choice, but almond, coconut and oat milks also contain nutrients that are great for recovery.

If whole milk doesn't suit you, try whey protein. It's taken from dairy but some people find it easier to digest. It contains essential amino acids and is thought to support immune health.

Try adding chia seeds to your recovery drink for a boost in fibre and protein. They also contain the electrolytes you lose through sweat such as magnesium and calcium along with iron to rebuild red blood cells.

Pea, hemp or rice proteins are great for satisfying vegan protein requirements.

YOU SAY

Diluted orange juice with a pinch of salt. Alternatively I buy Maltodextrin and make my own drink and add flavour to suit.

Kim Clark

500ml of juice with a very small amount of salt.

Adrian Austin

Probiotics are another addition you could make to your recovery drink. These 'friendly' bacteria can help support your immune health, meaning your body is fighting fit to recover from exercise.

Energy drinks generally contain easily digestible carbohydrates and electrolytes. Honey and coconut water are a natural source of these nutrients. Honey is also antibacterial and anti-viral thereby giving your immune system a helping hand post-exercise.



Vegetable smoothies are another great post-training drink. Adding protein such as pea or hemp protein will give you the building blocks for muscle recovery while vegetables give much-needed micronutrients, antioxidants and fibre.

Chocolate milk is as effective as most sports drinks according to trials.

Paul Worden

Half fresh orange juice, half boiled water, pinch of sugar and salt.

Davie Miller

I use one 50ml scoop of whey protein, one 50ml scoop Waxy Maize, one 5ml scoop glutamine mixed with water.

Stick Mann

Dioralyte and squash.

Peter Richards

Things to try this week

Stealth Real Fruit Energy Gel

The downside of energy gels can be the manufactured and somewhat synthetic fruit flavour. Stealth's energy gels use real fruit. With "the taste of a smoothie and the performance of an energy gel," the consistency is quite thick compared to other gels on the market. Already well proven as an official supplier to the Tinkoff-Saxo team, these gels helped give Alberto Contador the necessary boost during his Giro d'Italia victory — so surely good enough to aid mere mortals avoid bonking on a weekend ride.

£24.50 for a box of 14 gels
www.secret-training.cc



Ohso Good Chocolate

Chocolate that is good for you? Yes, you heard that correct, one bar of Ohso Good Chocolate contains a billion Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium bacteria. In simple terms this friendly bacteria can boost your immune system as well as have a positive effect on gastrointestinal function. So, now you can indulge yourself with a clean conscience. Prices start at £3.99 for a pack of seven bars with your first pack half price.

www.ohsolovesyourtummy.com



Milk

Scrap the mid-morning cup of tea and just stick with the thing that tops it all off at the end — milk! Studies suggest that drinking milk can be more effective than energy drinks when it comes to fluid retention. As well as boosting sodium, carbohydrate and protein stores, milk might just become one of the most crucial things you can consume in the build-up to a ride or immediately after a big race. So, beat your thirst by drinking the white stuff — just don't take it too far and slip a pint of milk into your bottle cage on a Sunday morning.

Caffeine boosts your performance

Studies have shown caffeine may offer significant performance gains. *Robert Hicks* investigates

Words: Robert Hicks Photos: Jesse Wild



After years and years of research, which has looked comprehensively at the relationship between caffeine and performance, the results are clear. Caffeine works. Its effectiveness has led to a huge surge in caffeine-supported supplements, a surge that doesn't seem like slowing down.

"Caffeine has been studied extensively over the last two decades, and numerous studies have demonstrated the ergogenic effects of caffeine on endurance performance," says performance nutritionist, senior lecturer and researcher Dr Mayur Ranchordas. "The use of caffeine for performance has several benefits, including the mobilisation of fatty acids to enhance fuel use, changes to muscle contractility, stimulation of the central nervous system, stimulation of the release and activity of adrenaline and enhancing glycogen re-synthesis. Caffeine has also been shown to enhance training and performance during periods of fatigue and sleep deprivation."

The relationship between caffeine and performance isn't new and its effects have been widely observed and scrutinised. In fact, until 2003, caffeine was on the World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) prohibited substances list. It was removed because evidence supporting its role in performance was 'inconclusive'. However, due to recent studies and the dramatic increase in its use, the substance is being monitored. So what does the research say?

Who's saying what?

Well, where to start? A brief chat with performance nutritionists or a quick search on Google and you'll find endless studies and research papers highlighting the positive relationship between caffeine and aerobic endurance.

In 2008, a study conducted by researchers at the Department of Kinesiology of the University of Georgia, observed a number of cyclists who had to exercise on a stationary bike for 15 minutes at

80 per cent heart rate, followed by four minutes of recovery before a final 15-minute VO2 peak performance ride. One hour before the trial, all riders ingested caffeine or a placebo. Their results showed that, when compared with the placebo, caffeine doses of 2 and 3mg/kg increased performance by four and three per cent.

This may not seem like a big improvement, but in a world of marginal gains, where people are looking for a one per cent increase in performance, four per cent is pretty impressive. Remember, EPO, an illegal and dangerous form of performance enhancement has been shown to improve performance by up to 10 per cent.

In the same year, US researchers wanted to look at the effects of moderate doses of caffeine on perceptions of leg muscle pain during a bout of high-intensity cycling. Sixteen women ingested caffeine (5mg/kg of body weight), and one hour later completed 30 minutes of cycling on a static bike at 80 per cent of peak aerobic capacity. The control group were administered a placebo. Their results showed that those who ingested caffeine experienced a much reduced leg muscle pain intensity rating compared with the placebo.

More recently, in 2013, a study published in the journal *PLOS ONE*, titled 'The Metabolic and Performance Effects of Caffeine Compared to Coffee during Endurance Exercise' stated, "there is consistent evidence supporting the ergogenic effects of caffeine for endurance-based exercise." In the trial, subjects had to ride at approximately 55 per cent of their VO2 max followed by a 45-minute energy-based target time trial. One hour prior to exercise, each athlete consumed drinks consisting of caffeine (5mg/kg of body weight), instant coffee (5mg/kg of body weight), instant decaffeinated coffee or placebo.

The results showed that performance times during the TT were significantly faster for both caffeine and coffee when

Rider view

Lucy Martin
(Matrix Pro Cycling)
spoke to
Cycling Weekly about
caffeine use
throughout
her career.



"I tend to have one caffeine gel in a race, usually the last part or in the last hour. Maybe during a stage race or a hot race, I tend to get a can of Coke from the team. I always find that kind of helps as well, but beforehand I always have a coffee. Usually just an espresso, the team usually brings a machine to make sure we get good coffee, as a lot of the girls like it."

Martin advises amateurs to be wary of effects that may come with over-consuming caffeine:

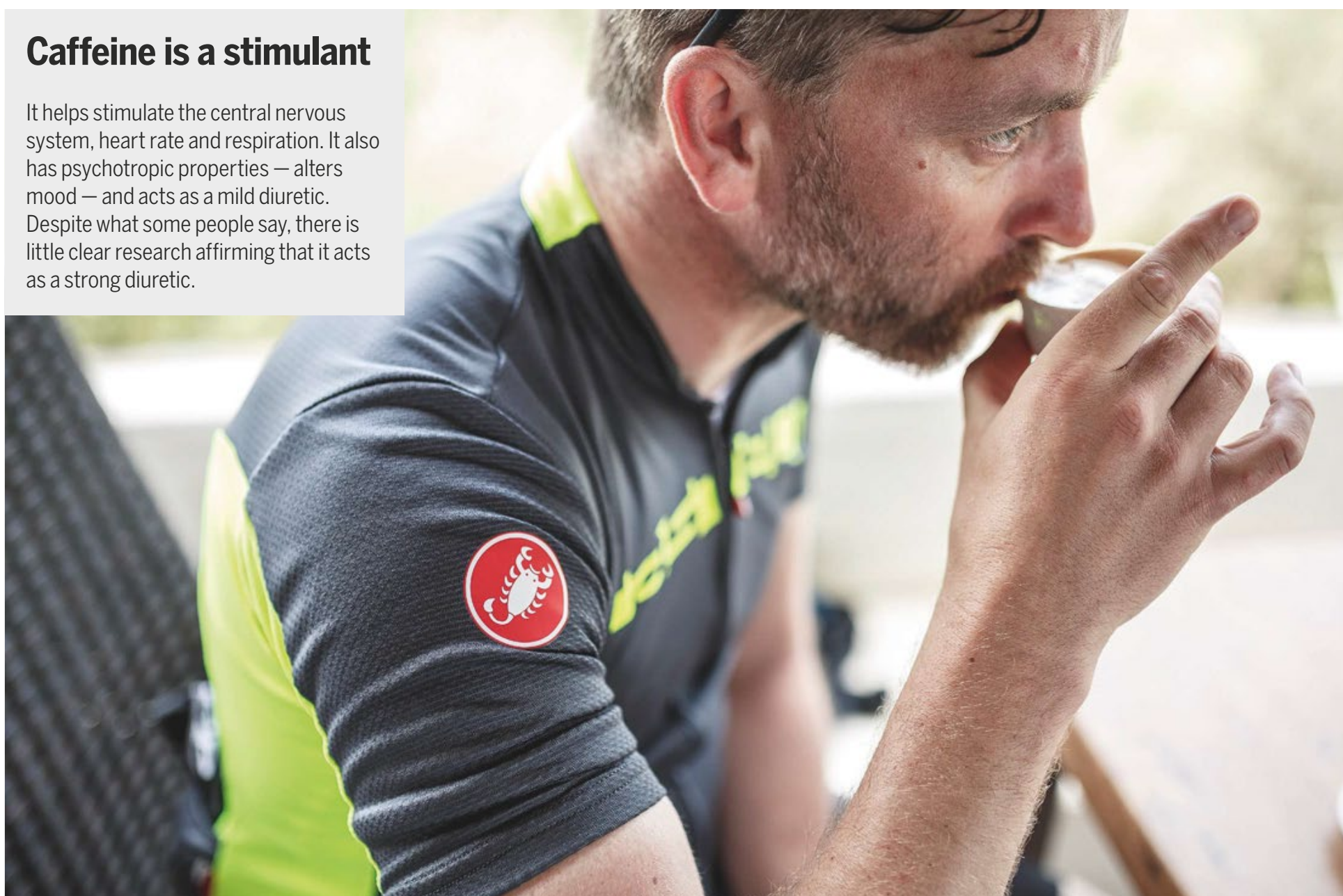
"I think amateurs should only take it under good advice as it is so easy to get into the habit of always taking it. Even just from a performance point of view, if you all of a sudden stop taking it or you forget to bring a gel, psychologically you might be thinking you won't perform [as strongly], as you'll be thinking, 'I've not got my caffeine'. When you stop taking it, you just feel awful, and it is definitely something that needs to be taken in moderation and controlled."

compared to placebo and decaf. Average power for caffeine and coffee during the TT was significantly greater too.

We told you the research was clear. However, Ranchordas, a former nutritionist for Rapha-Condor-JLT — now known as JLT-Condor — is keen to highlight that caffeine isn't for everyone and there are some dangers that cyclists need to know about. "It should be noted that certain individuals do not respond to caffeine as well as others, while some may be overly sensitive to its effects. And there are negative

Caffeine is a stimulant

It helps stimulate the central nervous system, heart rate and respiration. It also has psychotropic properties — alters mood — and acts as a mild diuretic. Despite what some people say, there is little clear research affirming that it acts as a strong diuretic.



effects to take into consideration. Caffeine can increase resting heart rate and blood pressure. It can also be addictive and disrupt sleep.

“Caffeine should be used strategically in competition after trying its use in training to ensure it is well tolerated. There seems to be a beneficial effect of reducing or eliminating caffeine in the weeks preceding a competition in order to maximise its effects.”

The dangers of caffeine

The dangers of caffeine are very real and, at the beginning of this year, any product containing more than 150mg of caffeine per litre (mg/l) must be labelled with the term ‘high caffeine content’.

Too much caffeine can cause stomach upset, heartburn and abdominal pain. Some research has also stated that it can cause inflammation of the lining of the stomach — gastric issues on the bike aren’t pretty.

“Caffeine doses of 2-3mg/kg have been shown to boost performance by up to four per cent”

Anxiety and sleeplessness are two common side-effects of consuming too much caffeine, which can have a major effect on your training.

Caffeine stimulates the brain and helps increase alertness. Any drop in concentration on the bike can lead to a crash or a missed opportunity when attacking or spotting the breakaways. Mental fatigue is just as important as physical fatigue, which is why caffeine is held in such high regard among cyclists. However, if you consume too much caffeine and find it difficult to switch off after your ride or have trouble getting to sleep, your rest and recovery

will suffer. Remember, your body repairs and recharges most during periods of sleep. If this is affected, your performance will be too.

There’s another issue too, which many cyclists fall victim to when consuming caffeine, the jitters. The jitters are a common side-effect of caffeine, especially if you take too much, which happens quite a lot considering many cyclist aren’t sure what the optimal dosage is.

One must remain calm on the bike. Needless fidgeting can contribute to a ‘twitchy’ bike and cause unnecessary accidents. Nerves can be expected before or during races, but an inability to remain calm can be dangerous.

So where’s the line between caffeine consumption that will improve performance and too much that will wreak havoc?

How much is too much?

This is a tricky question to

answer, as there are many factors that influence one's tolerance to caffeine. Some people are naturally more receptive to caffeine than others and therefore may need a smaller amount to see physiological changes compared to others. Understandably, the side-effects will be greater for those who are more receptive.

It has for a long time been accepted that caffeine doses of 1-6mg per kilogram of body weight will improve cycling performance, reduce the perception of effort and prolong time to exhaustion. Although in recent years, the research has been more specific and has stated that doses of 3mg per kg of body weight will cause physiological changes that will help improve performance. Though numerous studies have tried to find a link between certain doses and type, i.e. coffee, tablet, powder, gum and energy drinks, the results are inconclusive.

The timing of caffeine consumption is a topic still up for debate. For years, researchers, nutritionists and sport scientists have been trying to find out how quickly caffeine can be used by the body, and it's easy to see why. Timing is everything in cycling. Getting your fuelling wrong could be the difference between winning and losing. And there's very little point in having that mental edge the moment the race has finished.

When to quaff coffee?
In 2013, a study published in the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning* attempted to find out the most efficacious time to administer caffeine in chewing gum to enhance cycling performance. Eight cyclists performed

Rider view

Steve Lampier
Steve Lampier (Raleigh-GAC) spoke to *Cycling Weekly* about his



experiences of caffeine in cycling. "The only thing I do have is an espresso before a criterium and a caffeine gel before an evening criterium. I also have a caffeine gel in my back pocket if I think I'm going to be competitive in the finale of a road race, so I can have it in the last 20 minutes just in case.

"It would be interesting to race without caffeine to see whether it is pure placebo; for me, if I know I've had a caffeine gel, I'll feel like I'll perform a little bit better than if I haven't had a caffeine gel."

Lampier also sounded a note of caution about caffeine.

"I once took a Durvitan 600mg caffeine tablet off another rider and I blew my tits off! I couldn't do anything right and just felt shocking. I have never had caffeine tablets since and I don't really see the point in them."

lab sessions on five separate occasions. During the first visit, the subjects performed a graded exercise test to determine their maximal aerobic capacity (VO2 max). During the following four visits, three pieces of chewing gum were administered at three points: two hours before; one hour before and five minutes before. In three of the four visits, chewing gum containing 300mg of caffeine was administered at one of the time points. At the other time points, gum with no caffeine was given. Each subject then had to ride at 75 per cent of their maximum VO2 max for 15 minutes after which they performed a cycling time trial as fast as possible.

Results showed that those who took caffeinated gum two hours before the time trial saw no significant improvement in performance. By contrast, when the gum was taken five minutes before, performance improved.

This is only one of a number of studies that has looked at the effects of caffeine timing. But it seems that for maximum benefits, caffeine should be taken shortly before riding. And if there is a particular moment in a race where your concentration skills need to be sharp, make sure you give yourself enough time to get caffeine into your system.

Sources of caffeine

Food or drink	Serving	Caffeine content (mg)
Instant coffee	250ml cup	60
Tea	250ml cup	25
Coca Cola	330ml can	32
Sports gel	1 sachet	50-100



Fired up and back on it



Sometimes sporting clichés are true and Steve Johnson is evidence for the veracity of this one: form is temporary but class is permanent

Simon Schofield

He raced at a high level until the age of 27, abandoned cycling completely for the best part of two decades and now he's back with a bang — winning the British Cycling Masters Road Race Championships in 2013, and last month (June) the National Masters Circuit Race Championships, at the age of 56.

But in between Steve Johnson descended into what he calls his “black hole” turning his back on cycling, not just a bit, but completely. “I watched the Tour maybe a couple of times in that period. I stopped buying cycling magazines. I lost all interest in the sport and I never touched a bike,” he recalls. From a fit, competitive racer riding tough stage races he turned into “a complete mess.”

His decision was capricious and came within hours of finishing the hardest race of his career. Johnson came from a cycling family and had been competitive as a junior. “My dad was a good time triallist. Both my mum and dad were friends with the leading lights of the Port Sunlight Wheelers. I grew up with club runs and chats round the dinner table about the club 10. It was natural for me to start cycling.”

Seventies success

In the mid-1970s Johnson won cross, road and hill-climb championships. Moving to Scotland with work he raced the Girvin in Scottish colours and was later recruited as a sponsored rider for GS Strada-Lutz, a prominent domestic team in the early 1980s. He was entered for the Tour of Wales, an eight-day stage race.

“I got an absolute beating. I snapped a pedal, tore a muscle in my calf and suffered terribly all through the race.

“Expectations were high because I was in a sponsored team but the commitment was just beginning to get too much. I was a good rider but I was never going to be a great rider. It was a tipping point. I got home from the Tour of Wales, put my bike in a cupboard and didn't look at it again for 16 years. Cycling had been my life but it was a surprisingly easy decision. I was fed up and demoralised.”

Johnson's physical decline was steep once he turned his back on the bike. “I was used to eating a lot of food and I just carried on doing that. I put on four and a

half stone (28kg) and got up to 13 and a half stone (85kg).

“My blood pressure was sky high. I was even suffering from gout. I was taking statins for the blood pressure and I think I was probably depressed.”

Johnson then dropped a heavy printing machine on his leg, breaking an ankle in three places, requiring pins to treat it. He was immobile for three months.”

It prompted a crisis in his health and he decided something had to change. His decision to get back on a bike was as sudden as his decision to quit. He was shaken by a visit to a doctor who told him in no uncertain terms that he needed to lose weight and get his blood pressure down.

“I got one of my dad's old bikes out and thought I'd ride to work. It was 14 miles each way. It was absolute murder! The first time I did it after 400 yards, I had to stop to get my breath back.”

Johnson persisted and graduated to social riding, building up to being out up to 12 hours a week. “I didn't ride at any kind of intensity, it was all very easy miles but the weight began to come off. I lost it surprisingly quickly,” says Johnson.

And before long the competitive spirit had been re-awakened. Johnson's history became known among his riding buddies and he was tempted back into racing.

“The regional secretary of the League of Veteran Racing Cyclists wanted me to have a go and he talked me into it. I entered an event in the C Category. I was 46 years old by this time. I came fourth in my age group.”

“I didn't know what to expect but I saw some familiar faces from the old days and I began to realise how much I'd missed pinning a number on my back. I love the competitive element.”

Since the comeback Johnson has placed third in a European Masters Track event and won both road races and criterium championships in the LRVC.

“I absolutely love it the second time around because there's no pressure.”

Sport scientists would undoubtedly scoff at the idea that Johnson had retained any residual fitness after such a long break, but he believes firmly that he's been helped by genetic factors.

He's also worked hard. “Cycling is a sport that rewards hard work – there's not much luck involved.”

And although Johnson has taken full advantage of the technological advances in frame technology, riding an aero-optimised carbon-framed Wilier, his training techniques largely hark back to his glory days, with some modern ideas included.

He rides long, steady base miles in winter and ups the intensity in spring. He's a fan of hill repeats and standing start 500m sprints. His concession to modern thinking is to include some interval sessions but that's about as complicated as his training gets.

Given his age — Johnson's now 58 — he has to pay more attention to recovery this time around. “I don't do three hard days on the bounce anymore.”

Fit and winning again, has he any regrets? “I get wistful sometimes thinking about what might have been but I've had a successful business and a lovely family. It's not all bad and I was never going to be a world champion.”

How it worked for me

■ **Come back slowly:** It's hard to think that a former stage racer could be out of breath after a quarter of a mile, but no comeback should be rushed. Too much too soon and you will crash and burn.

■ **Keep it simple:** Gadgets are great, but they're not essential. Find a hill, ride up it and repeat until very tired, then rest, is a formula that will make any rider fitter.

■ **Recognise what makes you happy:** Training hard and not winning made Johnson miserable and led to him quitting the sport he loved. If what you're doing isn't working, make some changes.

■ **Recovery is critical:** As you age, it becomes even more important, but even riders in the first flush of youth need to recover properly. Recovery is what makes you fitter.

We say

Are good cyclists born or made? Johnson's ability to be competitive in a tough environment — and the LRVC is no picnic — at the age of 58 suggests at least some of his ability is innate. And there is known to be a genetic element to cycling success. We just don't know how much of a part it plays. But it's important to recognise, as Johnson does, that it's not all in the genes. Training works, and as another sporting cliché goes: “The harder you work, the luckier you get.” ■

The sweet truth

No benefit to slow-release carbs in sports drinks, says study

Once upon a time, nearly all energy drinks contained only glucose as a source of energy. A few years ago, drinks containing a 2:1 blend of glucose and fructose became popular; these drinks enable a more rapid uptake of energy during endurance exercise, resulting in better performance. More recently however, energy drinks containing glucose, fructose and isomaltulose (trade name 'Palatinose') have appeared on the market. Isomaltulose releases its energy in the body more slowly, and the theory is that by adding it, a more sustained release of energy overall can be achieved than with just glucose or fructose/glucose drinks. The question of course is: can this mix enhance performance?

In a newly published study, nine cyclists performed three trials on separate occasions. In each trial, the cyclists performed two hours of moderate-intensity riding at 60 per cent of maximum power, followed by a 16km

time trial at maximum speed. In one trial, they drank a glucose/fructose drink supplying 63g per hour of carbohydrate. In the second, they ingested an isomaltulose drink supplying the same amount of carbohydrate, while in the third; they drank flavoured water as a placebo.

Compared to the glucose/fructose drink, the isomaltulose drinks resulted in increased fat oxidation and decreased carbohydrate oxidation. However, that's where the good news ended because the isomaltulose drink also produced increasing levels of stomach cramps and bloating as the trial progressed. Moreover, the time trial performances were around a minute and a half slower, leading the researchers to conclude that 'consuming isomaltulose negatively affects exercise performance compared to glucose/fructose supplementation'.

Int J Sport Nutr Exerc Metab. 2015 Mar 26. [Epub ahead of print]



Regular sports drinks are best for performance

Great for...

post-ride meal

Thai-style chicken noodles

This is an incredibly quick, no-hassle meal, yet it seems on serving as if you have made quite an effort.

METHOD:

Put the oil into a large saucepan and fry the shallots, garlic, mushrooms and butternut squash until they are golden — it will take about three minutes.

Add the turmeric and curry paste. Stir around the pan and cook for another minute or so until the spices become fragrant.

Add the coconut milk and the stock and bring to a simmer. Cook for 10 minutes (the squash should feel quite soft) then add the chicken and tenderstem broccoli and cook for another five minutes. The squash should be completely tender and the chicken cooked through. You can add more stock or water to make it 'soupier.'

Season with the sugar, lime and fish sauce and adjust to your taste — you may want to add more lime or even a little more sugar. You want a balance of hot, sour, salty and sweet.

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the packet. Once cooked, divide the noodles between four or six bowls, spoon the chicken over them, and top with the spring onions, chilli and coriander. Offer wedges of lime to serve.

Time
taken:
40-45
min

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ½ tbsp groundnut oil
- 6 shallots, peeled and sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, sliced
- 100g shiitake mushrooms, sliced
- 600g butter squash, deseeded, peeled and cut into cubes
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 or 2 tbsp Thai red curry paste
- 400ml tinned coconut milk
- 250ml chicken stock
- 350g chicken breast fillet, cut into chunks
- 200g tenderstem broccoli, halved horizontally
- ½ to 1 tsp soft light brown sugar
- Juice of half a lime
- 2 tsp fish sauce
- 400g egg noodles

TO FINISH OFF:

- 2 spring onions, chopped diagonally
- 1 medium red chilli, halved, deseeded and cut into shreds
- 2 tbsp fresh coriander
- Wedges of lime

NUTRITION PER SERVING:

494
kcalories

1.2g
saturates

9g
sugar

6.5g
fat

1.9g
salt

TAKE HOME TRAINING SESSION

How to improve your hill-climbing

This week CW speaks to Eddie Fletcher, Wattbike's chief sport scientist, to help us improve our hill-climbing

Hill-climb training means high gearing and a low cadence, right? Well, the data that I have collected from Wattbike sessions suggest there is a more effective way that's kinder to muscles and joints.

To climb quicker we need to improve our physiological adaptation, muscle activation and pedalling technique. The data shows that the best way to do this is to concentrate on producing power while staying in the saddle, pushing a low gear with high cadence and doing intervals of 10-20 seconds, with workouts consisting of up to three sets of 10 intervals and leg speeds of 150rpm (if doing a 10-second burst) down to 130rpm (for 20-second bursts) — see suggested workout below.

On the road with suitable hills, intervals can be for longer durations,

with greater recovery between reps.

This method relies on knowing what constitutes a low gear for you and, if you are not used to leg speed work, it may take some time to adapt to higher rpms.

The gains can be huge but these sessions won't be easy. They are, though, more manageable than the traditional way and allow rapid recovery, although a rest day or recovery workout is needed the day after.

Workout best done on a turbo/Wattbike

Warm-up (20 minutes of easy riding)

10-30 intervals – in sets of 10 with 5 minutes in-between sets, rotating:

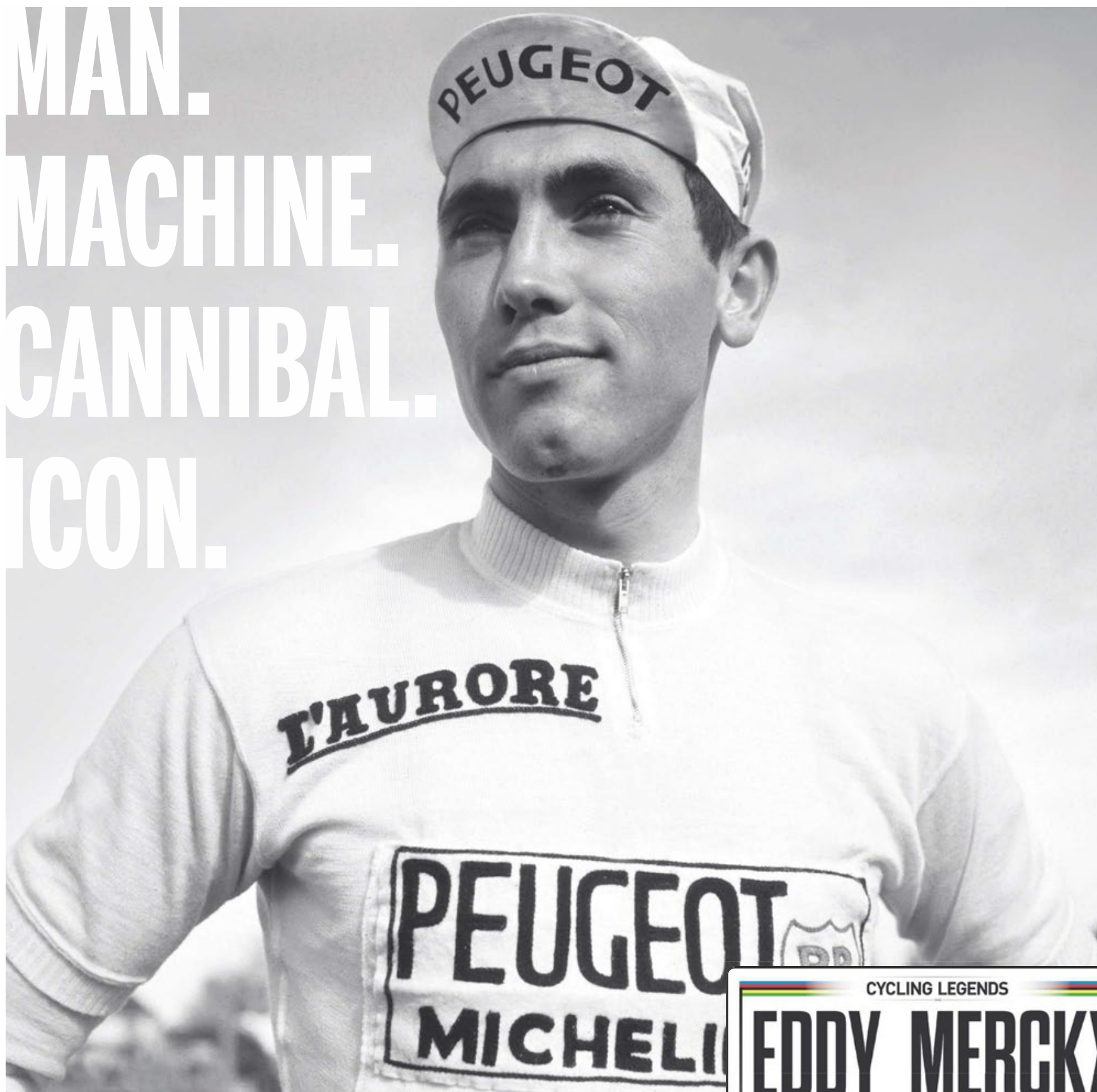
20sec on 40sec off	low gear	120-130 rpm
15sec on 45sec off	low gear	130-140 rpm
10sec on 50sec off	low gear	140-150 rpm

For the 40sec, 45sec and 50sec maintain a steady 90 rpm

Cool down (20 minutes of easy riding)

Effort	You can	It feels like you're...	Use it for...	% Max heart rate	% FT power
Easy Zone 1	Chat freely	Warming up	Warm-ups, cool-downs and recovery	60-65%	56-75%
Steady Zone 2	Speak one sentence at a time	Riding along in the bunch on the flat	Long rides	65-75%	76-90%
Brisk Zone 3	Speak a few words at a time	Breathing deeply and working hard	Long efforts of 10 to 20min	75-82%	91-105%
Hard Zone 4	Say only one word at a time	Really attacking (perhaps on a climb)	Efforts lasting 2-8min	82-89%	106-120%
Very hard Zone 5	G grunt and gasp	Sprinting	Efforts lasting less than 2min	89%-MHR	121%+

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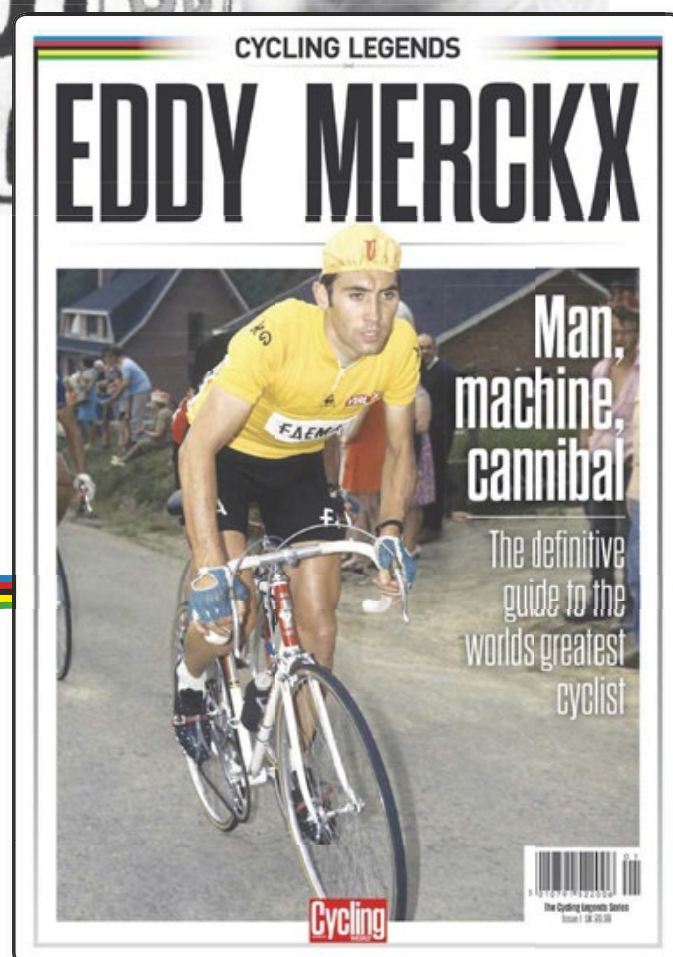
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Pinewood Climbs

CW
Difficulty
rating:
5/10

This
year's
event:
Aug 23

33
miles

1,000
metres
ascent

A sportive with a format that laughs in the face of geography and elevation

It would be all too easy to begin with an ode to Norfolk's flat landscape and the startlingly contrasting event name that is the Pinewood Climbs. But, the fact that Norfolk is renowned for its lack of elevation entitles you to double-take at the title of this sportive.

"We really wanted to put on a hilly event," explained Peter Dennes, CSUK co-founder, "but as there aren't a lot of hills in Norfolk we go up and down what we've got — a lot."

Where is it?

Holt Rugby Club sits just on the edge of the Norfolk Coast AONB near Sheringham Park, a National Trust owned park and estate. This is ideally situated to get you onto the area's quiet roads. Beginning inland, the route weaves through sleepy villages leading you to roads with great views of the coast out over the North Sea.

Why ride it?

The guys at Cycle Sportives UK have discovered every tough climb in the North Norfolk Coast area so never fear if the thought of riding along flat roads bores you. One loop of 33 miles packs in 1,000 metres of total ascent, but you can pit your wits against the course up to three times: 99 miles with 3,000 metres of climbing.

History

Cycle Sportives UK is run by two cheery blokes, Matt Willmot and Pete Dennes. They set up the events company in the winter of 2013 with their first events — a mini winter series of sportives. The Pinewood Climbs is now in its second year and has moved from an October date to the end of August.



How to enter

www.cyclesportivesuk.co.uk. Entries close one week before the event date but you can enter on the day if places are available.

HQ details

To get to Holt Rugby Club on Bridge Road you need to pick up the A148 that runs out of King's Lynn towards Cromer. The nearest train station is Sheringham, five miles away.

Where to stay

The market town of Holt is worth a visit. It's a maze of streets and alleyways, home to shops selling local food and merchandise. You can stay at the Feathers Hotel or there is Byfords if you have cash to splash. Also try Three Corners and the Stable Bed and Breakfast.

Where to eat

The food at Byfords is reasonably priced and they have a great bakery and shop attached — we can vouch for the tasty cake. The Kings Head, Holt has a steak restaurant and ale house making it an ideal spot to head to post ride. There is also the Barn cafe/bistro.

Local bike shop

Cycles UK in Norwich supplies the event back-up. The shop is on London Street in the town centre.



This event is just one loop of 33 miles with 1,000 metres of total ascent packed into it over 10 climbs. “We couldn’t have done a longer loop and kept the intensity of the climbing so we decided to offer riders the chance to take on one, two or three loops of the course,” said Dennes.

And that is where it starts to get interesting. Three loops of this course amounts to 99 miles with 3,000 metres of total ascent — around Norfolk let’s not forget — giving a figure not dissimilar to an Alpine sportive.

The route begins with a descent into the village of Kelling, on the edge of North Norfolk’s salt marshes. The road hugs walls and houses constructed from small, rounded chunks of light grey Norfolk flint. Bright ivy, purple wisteria and hot pink rhododendrons festoon the walls, filling the air with a heady floral scent.

But don’t be too taken with the village’s prettiness. Just around the corner, out of Salthouse village lies the first climb of the day: Bard Hill. Its gradient varies between five and nine per cent.

ORGANISER'S TARGET TIMES			
Route	Distance	Ave speed (Men)	Time
One loop	33 miles	12mph	2hr 45min
One loop	33 miles	15mph	2hr 12min
One loop	33 miles	19mph	1hr 44min
Two loops	66 miles	12mph	5hr 30min
Two loops	66 miles	15mph	4hr 24min
Two loops	66 miles	19mph	3hr 29min
Three loops	99 miles	12mph	8hr 15min
Three loops	99 miles	15mph	6hr 35min
Three loops	99 miles	19mph	5hr 13min

You reach the most easterly point of the route, the village of Newgate, before looping around and pointing your wheels in the direction of Cromer. But there are a few more climbs to battle, before you brush by this seaside town.

It’s a short drag along the A149 to Weybourne to tackle one of the steepest and longest climbs, Station Road. You’re a third of the way into the route but if you are attempting to complete 99 miles then pace yourself; this 12.5 percenter, with 70 miles and just over 2,000 metres of climbing in your legs, is going to hurt.

As you drop towards the town of Sheringham, a right turn takes you round a busy roundabout. Slow down and don’t go barrelling round. This is the busiest part of the route and provides the only climb that cuts through a residential area.

Pushing away from the houses, after turning off the A148, you’ll take a right onto Britons Lane. From the brow of this climb there’s a great view over the North Sea. It’s also part of the route used for the 2010 Tour of Britain and features the category-four climb of Sandy Lane. Just short of a mile, this six per cent climb was used as a KoM for the race, such is its severity.

After descending down into East Runton the route starts to pull you back to the start. You’re heading west now along the coast road and while it might not have any real climbs, the general contours of the road can bite quite unexpectedly.

A left onto Holdgate Hill is the last climb between you and the finish. If you’re lucky you might just hear the chug of a train and see plumes of steam floating on the air as this road runs parallel with the North Norfolk Railway.

You’re now back at the rugby club. One down, two to go — hopefully. ■

The challenges

1 Common Lane to Pretty Corner

This stretch is 1.8 miles long and for the most part is only three per cent. But as you turn left at Pretty Corner be prepared for a short, sharp burst out of the saddle as the road hits 14 per cent.

2 Station Road

This is the fourth climb of the route and rears up just as you pass over the railway line. It's just over a mile long with a maximum gradient of 12.5 per cent.

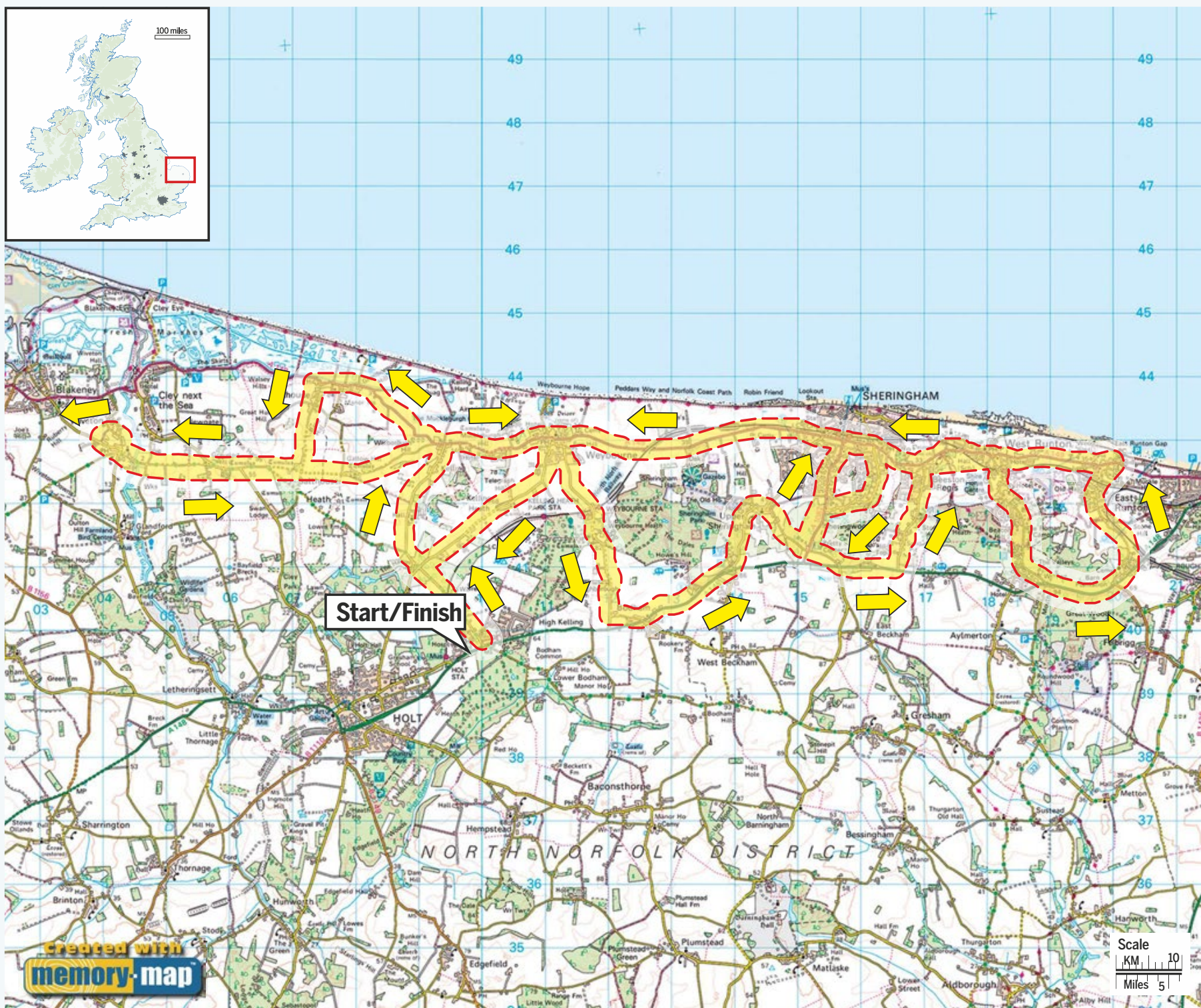
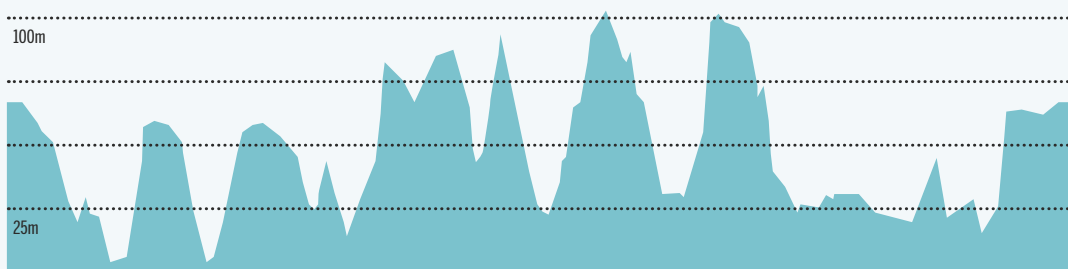
3 Holgate Hill

This is the last hill on the route. It's a shame you can't take a look back as the view over the sea is stunning. Unfortunately, all you have is a narrow road offering 10 per cent gradients that sweep under overhanging trees.

NAIL IT

4 Sandy Lane

Back in 2010 the Tour of Britain visited Norfolk, for stage six, which saw the peloton travel from King's Lynn to Great Yarmouth. Part of that route included a KoM point just after West Runton village, on Sandy Lane. The climb is only 0.80 miles long and comes at approximately 23 miles. Hit the climb hard so you don't lose power over the hump of the railway bridge. The average gradient is six per cent so you should hit the top in no time — unless of course it's loop number two or three, then, depending on fitness, it could be granny gear and grind it out.



Horsham Cycling

They're all about being inclusive, and with nearly 200 members it seems to be working. *Hugh Gladstone* joined them for a ride

Inclusivity is one of those buzzwords that gets bandied around willy-nilly nowadays — but you can't accuse Horsham Cycling of merely giving it lip service. When they go out on a Sunday, the West Sussex club's runs split into no less than seven different ability groups. Even when they take *Cycling Weekly* for an ad-hoc midweek jaunt, the 25 riders who turn out split into three to cater for different levels.

"I used to be in a club up in Glasgow — Glenmarnock Wheelers," explains Stewart Forbes, who co-founded Horsham Cycling in 2005. "There was one club ride there, and if you don't make the grade then you had to go away, train hard and come back later.

"When we formed this club we wanted to create a club

that's for everyone. So we have lots of ride groups. Folk can move up levels as they become fitter.

"Some folk will stay with one group, others will move up. This gets people in the door."

So too, you might imagine, does the surrounding countryside. There are the North and South Downs within riding distance to either side of Horsham, while the Sussex Weald in the more immediate vicinity offers gentler terrain.

"This is the road the Tour of Britain came along in top gear last year," says Alan Dolan, another Horsham based Scot, of Hammerpond Road. It's a lovely tree-lined lane that heads east from the town, dipping and diving past golf courses and large ponds, glinting in the sunshine of a

fine morning. At Slaugham we turn right and head south along wider, straighter and slightly flatter roads, albeit equally quiet.

The ride essentially forms a rectangle, with the third leg being a stretch along the foot of the South Downs escarpment, where the narrow lane wraps tightly through villages then opens up between meadows. On this ride we remain north of the hills, beyond which sits the English Channel. But not even the sea is necessarily an obstruction to a Horsham Cycling outing.

Channel hopping

"We do an Isle of Wight weekend, we go to Belgium, all sorts of bits and pieces," explains club chairman John Chaplin. In April some of the members headed to Paris-Roubaix to ride the sportive and watch the race; in the summer, parties head to the Tour de France and partake in the Dunwich Dynamo ride.

The wide cross-section of activities is complemented by weekly evening time trials and socials such as pub nights.

"That's the great thing about the club," Chaplin adds. "When you come along and join in with the rides, because you're rubbing shoulders with people doing other things, you get enthused to

Club facts

Based: Horsham, Sussex

Members: 185

Founded: 2005

Meets: Sunday morning run (9am) from the Conservatory Cafe in Horsham Park

Email: membership@horshamcycling.co.uk

Telephone: Robert Skeet, secretary, 01403 270089

Website: www.horshamcycling.co.uk

do other activities as well."

The social aspect of the club is really thrown into focus when, one by one, the three groups pull up at Stan's Bike Shack, a recently opened cycling cafe on the edge of Partridge Green. With great enthusiasm, riders spill in to order tea and cakes then take seats around tables outside. The banter is plentiful and the laughter loud. This congregation happens on a larger scale each Sunday when each of the various groups return to Horsham's Conservatory cafe to discuss their rides.

Clearly the club is doing something right. Ten years in, membership is nudging 200 and they're looking now to formally organise some Saturday runs.

"The club grew very quickly," recalls Forbes of ▶

History

A desire to cater to all types of cycling, rather than just racing, drove Stewart Forbes and Keith Russell to found Horsham Cycling in 2005. Note the lack of the word 'club' in the name — it's for everyone rather than just traditional club cyclists.

It's the first club in the Sussex town for decades, with Horsham Unity having been dissolved in 1968. After the new club was publicised, members of the Unity

came forward to donate trophies from the long-dormant club, making HC something of a continuation.

True to their founding aims, Horsham Cycling run a number of races over several disciplines. A hill-climb in nearby Staplefield is the pinnacle of their calendar, while they also organise time trials of various lengths as well as track sessions in the winter, held on Calshot Velodrome in Southampton.

Achievements

■ The club runs its own magazine, Chain Line, which gives members a chance to share their cycling experiences four times a year.

■ *Riding It Out* author Pam Goodall is a social rider with the club.

■ Club members have completed a number of tough challenges such as London-Edinburgh-London (ridden in 116 hours), Raid Pyrenean and Raid Alpine.



■ The club runs a very successful open time trial each June.



Ride highlights

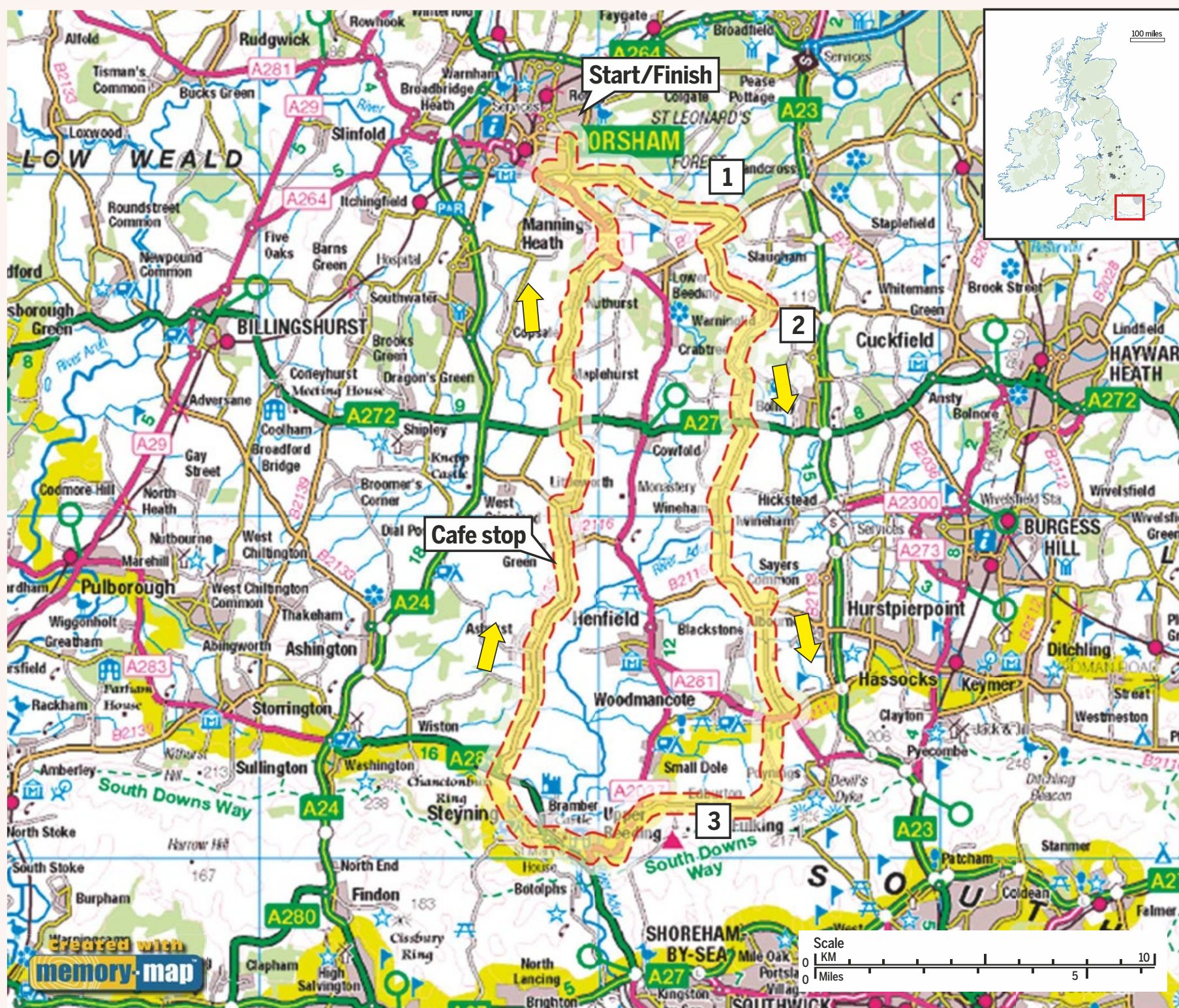
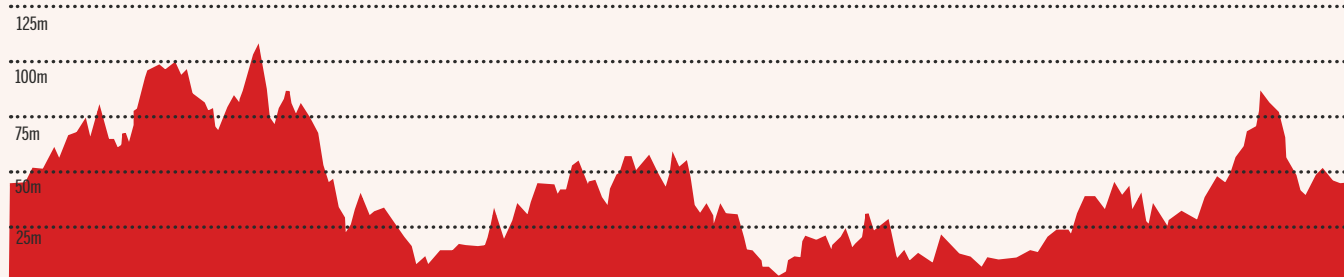
2 Warninglid

At the top of a rise, this prim little village lines the route. Its smart houses and neat gardens are the stuff of best-kept village contests. The 18th-century Half Moon Inn sits in the village centre.

3 Edburton Road

To your left, the South Downs rise up above you revealing chalky cracks and the occasional paraglider. Look right and your slightly elevated position offers a wide vista over the Weald.

Inspired by his childhood nickname, Steve Sole opened Stan's Bike Shack (The Old Farm Shop, Bines Road, Partridge Green, West Sussex, RH13 8EQ; Tel: 01403 710514; www.stansbikeshack.com) last August. Sitting on the Downslink path as well as the local road network, it offers a selection of cakes, rolls and sandwiches as well as cycling essentials like inner tubes and a pump. The Conservatory (The Conservatory Cafe (North Street, Horsham, RH12 1RJ, Tel. 01403 259941; www.theconservatorycafe.co.uk) is the club's other favourite hangout.





Stan's the man when it comes to scrum



The humour flows freely at the coffee stop



Which came first, the jersey or the interior decor?

its formative years. "Within the first five months we were up to about 50 or 60 and then over the first five years we were well over 100."

Olympic fever gave things a further boost in 2012, but

it's perhaps that all-inclusive ethos that has really driven its popularity.

"We get some people joining the club that wouldn't normally join a cycling club," says Forbes. "A lot of them

over the years will end up racing, doing time trials and sportives. I think a lot of other clubs have followed our lead in establishing different ride groups for different abilities. I think that's important." ■

Meet the club



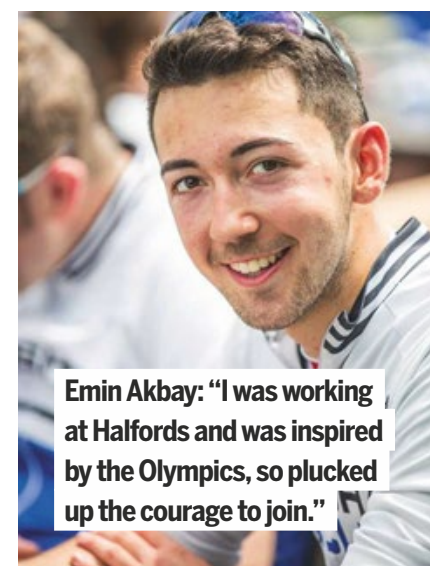
Greg Turner: "I was riding mountain bikes but had unfinished business as a roadie so joined the club a year ago."



Linda Beattie: "A neighbour saw me cycling by myself and suggested I should join."



Alfie Ramsay: "I like it that there are groups that go out at seven different speeds."



Emin Akbay: "I was working at Halfords and was inspired by the Olympics, so plucked up the courage to join."

Contact www.horshamcycling.co.uk

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Haytor

Bovey Tracey, Devon

Simon Warren

Haytor was the venue for the first ever summit finish of the Tour of Britain, a tradition that has been carried on by the Tumble in 2014, and Hartside, which will offer the climbers their chance to shine this year. Back in 2013, the winner on Haytor was a 21-year-old Simon Yates, announcing his arrival on the world scene in the best way possible.

The climb, measured here, starts as the B3387 forks left, so here is where you turn on the gas. This is one

for the pure climbers, a sit-down-and-spin climb that requires a long measured effort instead of a short burst of power. The gradient averages just six per cent over its length, but there are a couple of 12 per cent segments. As you approach the finish in the shadow of the mighty

Haytor Rocks there is

a small plateau, a brief rest, past a car park which always seems to contain an ice cream van. Resist temptation until

you've ridden the last demanding 500 metres to the brow ahead, surrounded by the beauty of Dartmoor.

CW
Difficulty
rating:
5/10

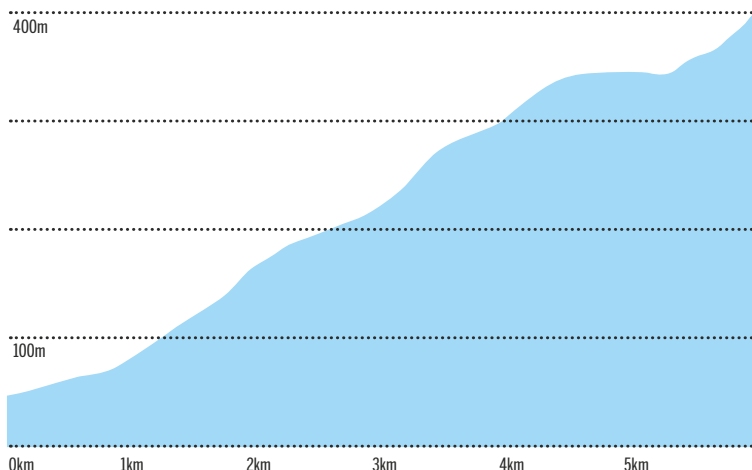
The stats

WHERE Head west out of Bovey Tracey on Station Road, cross the roundabout on the A382 then start the climb as the B3387 forks left.



KOM Top Tip Don't stop for an ice cream before the summit.

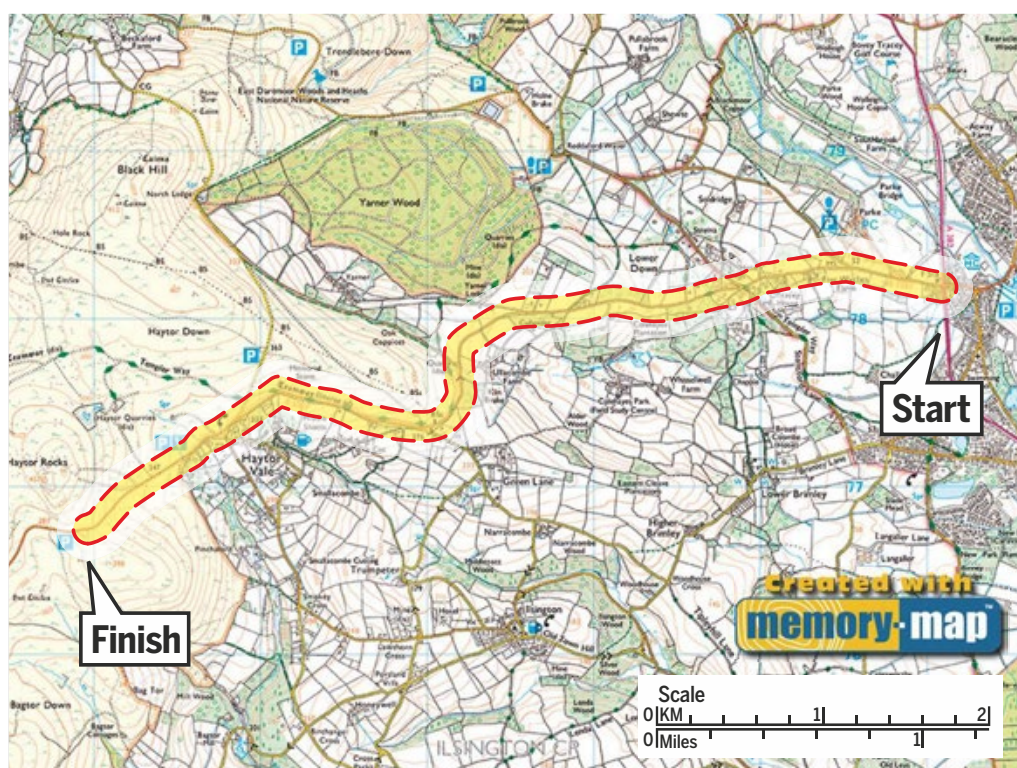
5400m	393m	340m	6%	12%
Length	Summit height	Height gain	Average gradient	Max gradient



Strava file: www.strava.com/segments/6665314



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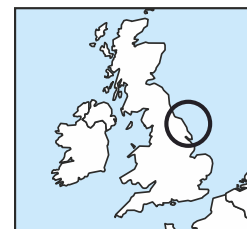
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Cav edged out in Lincoln thriller



Kennaugh beats fellow Manxman in National Championship finale

Words: Nick Bull Photos: Andy Jones

When the leading four riders on the road after six of nine ascents of Michaelgate resembled a reverse of this year's Omloop Het Nieuwsblad (three Team Sky riders and one from Etixx-Quick Step), the excitement appeared to be disappearing from Sunday's National men's road race in Lincoln.

Het Nieuwsblad winner Ian Stannard and defending champion Peter Kennaugh were almost a minute ahead of chasers Mark Cavendish and Luke Rowe, with the latter predictably and understandably not exerting himself to the full, aware that his team-mates were up the road. It looked like Sky had the jersey won.

However, thanks to a gutsy ride from Cavendish, the final 25km of the event proved a fascinating and enthralling four-way contest between three former winners (Stannard won the title in 2012, Cavendish the following year) and a likely heir apparent, Rowe.

"At one time, I thought we had made the winning move," said eventual victor Kennaugh of his and Stannard's escape, which formed on the third ascent of

Lincoln's famed climb. "Obviously Cav was super strong coming across in a lap — they were motoring behind.

"He comes to these races and he gets a lot out of them; he spends a lot of time each year with his team working for him, but he gets excited that it's the one time of the year he's able to get his head out in the wind.

"It all goes to show he's not just about being a sprinter; he's as strong as anybody else."

Hardest race yet

Kennaugh described the race as "one of the hardest of my career," particularly since the action began within the opening three kilometres. Sky split the peloton in the crosswinds, which quickly put Adam and Simon Yates —

"I looked around and everyone looked the same. They were on their knees"

potential winners on such a course — out of contention.

A handful of domestic riders (including One Pro Cycling's Yanto Barker and Jon Mould, plus three from Madison-Genesis) managed to make the split with their WorldTour companions, but they were distanced second time up Michaelgate. Scott Thwaites (Bora-Argon 18) and Adam Blythe (Orica) suffered the same fate when Cavendish and Rowe began their bid to catch Stannard and Kennaugh, but held on to take fifth and sixth respectively.

Upfront, Kennaugh had looked the best of the four leaders on the cobbled climb, and continuously opted to ascend it using its left-hand gutter, possibly something he picked up when he won the Lincoln GP two years ago — not that he was entirely confident of his chances.

"I looked around and everybody looked the same," said Kennaugh. "They were on their knees, not saying a lot.

"It got to that point in a race where everybody was slowing down and are super-fatigued, and it's about who's got the freshest legs on the last laps."

Stannard blinked first, attacking approximately halfway on the last lap, which was countered by Cavendish and a following Kennaugh. The showdown for the title was poised: two Manxmen and the championship's last two winners, head-to-head.

Ultimately, Kennaugh proved strongest in the hill-climb sprint and took the title, but Cavendish took the plaudits after his all-or-nothing performance.

"I just wasn't content with riding for third place, so I just started racing," said Cavendish. "I thought of what Ian did at Het Nieuwsblad when he was with three guys from my team. So I thought, 'I've got to go on the attack.'"

Owain Doull takes U23 win

Owain Doull's strong 2015 season continued as he led home the domestic riders in seventh, and with it claimed the under-23 champion's jersey.

Doull (Team Wiggins) finished 6.29 behind Peter Kennaugh, but two minutes ahead of Sam Lowe (Raleigh-GAC) and BC Academy Programme

rider Matt Gibson in the espoirs category.

"I was really disappointed not to win it last year on home soil in Abergavenny," said the 22-year-old Welshman, "but I just didn't have the legs that day. It's a big jersey, I really wanted to win this one today."

His triumph in Lincoln follows two stages wins in

the Flèche du Sud stage race in May, as well as strong performances in the Nations Cup series for under-23s.

"I've had a really good year," he added. "I've stepped up a bit this year; I just had a lot of bad luck in 2014, whereas, touch wood, I've had quite a clear run this year."

197km

Length of the men's race

30

Finishers in the men's race

27.7mph

Average speed of the men's race

107km

Length of the women's race

48

Finishers in the women's race



Results

Elite men's road race (197km)

1. Peter Kennaugh (Team Sky) in 4:27:33; 2. Mark Cavendish (Etixx-Quick Step) at 0:05; 3. Ian Stannard (Team Sky) at 0:39; 4. Luke Rowe (Team Sky) at same time; 5. Scott Thwaites (Bora-Argon18) at 3:00; 6. Adam Blythe (Orica-GreenEdge) at 3:30; 7. Owain Doull (Team Wiggins) at 6:29; 8. Yanto Barker (One Pro Cycling) at 8:04; 9. Steve Lampier (Raleigh-GAC) at 8:05; 10. Jon Mould (One Pro Cycling) at 8:07.

Under-23 men's road race (197.1km)

1. Owain Doull (Team Wiggins) in 4:34:02; 2. Sam Lowe (Raleigh-GAC) at 1:57; 3. Matt Gibson (100% ME) at 2:16.



Armitstead 'in a league of her own'

Climbing masterclass propels Boels-Dolmans star to third national title

Nick Bull

Defending British road race champion Laura Trott did not sound very surprised when told about details of Lizzie Armitstead's race-winning move on Michaelgate on Sunday.

"She went up [the climb] in the big ring?" Trott asked rhetorically, having been told as much shortly after crossing the line. "She's in a league of our own, none of us is close to that."

Trott's honesty wasn't misguided, as Armitstead delivered a mature and rounded performance — and one that was rewarded with a winning margin unseen in the event's recent history.

The Boels-Dolmans rider put 1:52 into her nearest challenger Alice Barnes in the space of 13km, as her confidence in her ability on the climb paid off.

"I pushed most times up on the climb to test the legs of the people behind, and I knew if I really went for it I could drop them — so I went for it," she said.

"I knew I could put 30 seconds into

them over the climb, and once you've got that daylight between you, it makes things much easier."

Twelve months ago, Armitstead was made to pay for attacking too far out from the finish, and was beaten by Trott and her then Wiggle-Honda team-mate Dani King.

On Sunday, she played the waiting game, happy for Claire Thomas (unattached) and Amy Roberts (Wiggle-Honda), Annabel Fisher (Bonito Squadra Corse) and Joanna Rowsell (Pearl Izumi-Sports Tours International) to form the day's first notable escape group.

Armitstead instigated the move that cancelled out their advantage and split the peloton, but with all eyes on the Yorkshirewoman, the split lacked significant momentum.

"I understand it, it's a fair tactic," said Armitstead when asked about being the marked rider.

But having led the peloton over top of Michaelgate on every lap up to that point, Armitstead could not be caught once she launched her blistering attack

on the penultimate ascent of the climb.

"When Lizzie goes, she goes, you can't be disappointed when she just rides away from you," said Barnes, the race's surprise package.

Best known for her off-road accomplishments (she's a second year on British Cycling's Olympic Academy mountain bike programme), Barnes got the better of Trott to take silver, and with it the under-23 champion's jersey.

"I came here with no expectations," Barnes said. "But I've done a few road races this year, and I've been doing more training on the road this year, which set me up well for the race."

Results

Elite women's road race (107km)

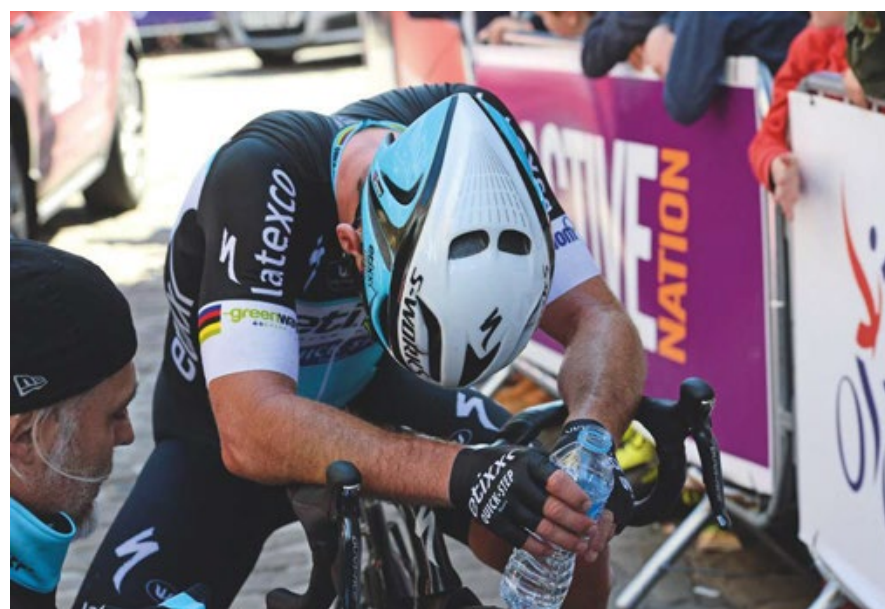
1. Elizabeth Armitstead (Boels-Dolmans) in 2:51:14;
2. Alice Barnes (Betch.nl-Superior Brentjens) at 1:52*;
3. Laura Trott (Matrix Fitness);
4. Molly Weaver (Liv-Plantur)* all at same time;
5. Nikki Harris (Telenet-Fidea) at 2:01;
6. Katie Archibald (Pearl Izumi-Sports Tours International) at 2:03*;
7. Hannah Barnes (United Healthcare) at 2:05;
8. Lucy Coldwell (Unattached) at 2:09;
9. Sharon Laws (Bigla Pro Cycling) at 2:12;
10. Hayley Simmonds (Unattached) at 2:15.

* Denotes under-23 riders

National Championships in pictures



Clockwise from top:
Riders wind through the crowded old streets of Lincoln; Cav takes a well-earned post-race rest; former *CW* staffer Louise Mahé digs deep; (l to r) Barnes, Trott and Weaver fight it out for second place; men's winner Kennaugh celebrates with family



Fourth time trial title for Dowsett

Movistar man shrugs off wasp sting to enter record books

Nick Bull

Not even an early wasp sting or late off-road excursion could stop Alex Dowsett from powering to a record-equalling fourth British time trial title at Cadwell Park last Thursday evening.

Dowsett, the only WorldTour professional to compete in the Championships, posted a 1:00.11 for the 44.8-kilometre course, which started and finished at the motor racing circuit via a detour into the Lincolnshire Wolds.

The Movistar rider finished 3:31 ahead of runner-up, NFTO's fledgling tester Edmund Bradbury, with Ryan Perry (SportGrub-Kuota) completing the podium a further 20 seconds back. Dowsett now sits level with Stuart Dangerfield, who won the title four times between 1998 and 2005.

"Something always happens at Nationals for me. I think I've had a crash, a bike change, being sick as a dog and this year a wasp sting [on the inside of his thigh] so, yeah, a thrill a minute," joked Dowsett, referring to his dramas in the last three editions of the time trial championships.

"I had a bit of a moment on the second to last

corner around here, too; I've got quite a few friends who race British Superbike and I'm not going to hear the end of it for missing that apex!"

The 26-year-old was the overriding favourite for the victory, particularly since a heavily-rumoured appearance from defending champion Bradley Wiggins did not materialise.

But it wasn't until he caught four-minute man — and fourth-place finisher Matt Bottrill (www.drag-2zero.com), likely competing in his last Nationals before a move to triathlon for 2016 — that Dowsett sensed he was going to add the 2015 title to those from 2011, 2012 and 2013.

"I thought I'd overcooked it a little bit early on," he said. "Being as hilly as it is it was difficult — you didn't want to give away too much early on, but you didn't want to go too hard. It wasn't easy getting it right."

"But when I saw Matt I knew that either he was on a horrendous day or I was on a good one."

"Now every time I do a time trial I get to wear this [jersey], it stands me out as either the British or Dutch national champion!"

Student Simmonds in different class

Last year's National 10 and 50-mile champion Hayley Simmonds claimed the biggest victory of her career when she took the British time trial title at Cadwell Park.

Simmonds, who combines cycling with a PhD in Organic Chemistry at Cambridge, clocked a 51:39.89 for the 33.6-kilometre course, and finished nearly 80 seconds ahead of runner-up Molly Weaver (Liv-Plantur). Dame Sarah Storey (Pearl Izumi-Sports Tours International) placed third, 1:21 behind.

"It's completely overwhelming — I've worked really hard for this," said 26-year-old Simmonds. "After I finished and was half collapsing over my bike, I could just hear the commentator say my time and then say: 'will anyone go under 50 minutes?'"

"Dame Sarah and Katie Archibald [who

placed sixth] are both capable of going under 50 and at that point I wasn't even sure that I was in the lead, let alone that I was going to win by a minute."

Simmonds (Team Velosport) switched from rowing to cycling in 2009; a transition that is clearly paying off.

"Cycling has just changed my life to be honest," she said. "I've lost loads of weight and I've pushed really hard to drop those extra few kilos, ready for this, ready for that climb on the course and the climb on here."

"It's really paid off — it's been a really hard road but it's paid off."

Successful title defence for Davies

Welshman Scott Davies admitted his relief after he followed in the footsteps of Alex Dowsett in

2009 and Sam Harrison two years ago to defend his under-23 time trial crown in Lincolnshire.

The 19-year-old, who is a first-year on the British Cycling Olympic Academy Programme, beat Owain Doull (Team Wiggins) to the victory for the second year running.

"Relieved is the word that I'd use to describe how today went," said Davies, who posted a 47:20.32 for the 33.6-kilometre course, six seconds ahead of Doull. "I came up to it with a bit more pressure than last year."

"It was pretty tough — I think the nature of the course meant holding a rhythm wasn't that easy today."

Tao Geoghegan Hart (Axeon Cycling Team) finished third, and was the only other rider to post a time under 48 minutes, in a 47:37.90.



“Being as hilly as it is was difficult — you didn’t want to give away much too early on, but you didn’t want to go too hard”

TT triumph: Dowsett buzzed around the Cadwell Park circuit



Simmonds’s focus was unwavering

Results	
Men, 44.8km	
1. Alex Dowsett (Movistar)	1-00-11.13
2. Edmund Bradbury (NFTO)	1-03-42.25
3. Ryan Perry (SportGrub-Kuota)	1-04-02.28
4. Matthew Bottrill (www.drag2zero.com)	1-04-31.50
5. Lloyd Chapman (Richardsons-Trek)	1-05-43.02
6. Ashley Cox (CC Luton)	1-05-52.70
7. Tejvan Pettinger (Sri Chimnoy RT) ..	1-06-07.64
8. Jason Bouttell (Velopro)	1-06-15.57
9. Josh Williams (Revolutions Racing) ..	1-06-23.50
10. Gruffudd Lewis (Pedal Heaven RT) ..	1-06-31.07
Women, 33.6km	
1. Hayley Simmonds (VeloSport-Montegrappa)	51-39.89
2. Molly Weaver (Liv-Plantur)	52-58.18
3. Dame Sarah Storey (Pearl Izumi-Sports Tours International)	53-00.61
4. Lucy Coldwell (Unattached)	53-37.14
5. Ciara Horne (Pearl Izumi-Sports Tours International)	53-38.31
6. Katie Archibald (Pearl Izumi-Sports Tours International)	53-41.78
7. Hannah Barnes (UnitedHealthcare Pro Cycling Team)	55-29.68
8. Abby-Mae Parkinson (Giordana-Triton)	55-35.93
9. Julia Shaw (www.drag2zero.com)	56-11.57
10. Anna Christian (Wiggle-Honda)	56-22.44
Under-23 men, 33.6km	
1. Scott Davies (100% ME)	47-20.32
2. Owain Doull (Team Wiggins)	47-26.53
3. Tao Geoghagen Hart (Axeon Cycling Team)	47-37.90
4. Thomas Baylis (One Pro Cycling)	48-04.42
5. Joshua Teasdale (Prorace Cycling Team)	48-15.43
6. James Shaw (Lotto-Soudal)	48-26.11
7. Mark Stewart (100% ME)	48-37.24
8. Gabriel Cullaigh (100% ME)	48-40.72
9. Matt Gibson (100% ME)	48-56.51
10 Ben Hetherington (Achieve-Northside-Skinnergate)	49-03.57

Bottrill's birthday bonanza

One day before celebrating his 38th birthday, national champion Matt Bottrill recorded the fastest 50-mile time of the season, in the Burton DCA event at Etwall, in Derbyshire.

The drag2zero.com rider, who had finished fourth in the British Time Trial Championship two days earlier, clocked 1:35.54 — just over a minute outside his own competition record — for victory by almost three minutes, rewarding himself by taking a day off on Sunday for a family outing.

The next three riders also beat the previous season's best, headed by Richard Bideau (Pendle Forest CC) who finished in 1:38.39, 10 seconds faster than Steve Irwin (North Lancs RC), with Charles Taylor (South Pennine RC), 1:39.40, taking fourth place.

Elsewhere, Anthony Bromley (Barnsley RC) won the Otley CC's 50-mile event in 1:45.01 on the two-lap Dishforth to Knayton course, while victory in the Hampshire RC 50 at Diss went to Nick Dwyer (Lewes Wanderers CC) in 1:45.19.

Matt Smith (Team VeloVelocity) won API-Metrow's 25-mile time trial for the second successive year and broke the event record despite a change to the finish of the Newmarket-based course which added an estimated 10 seconds of riding time. Smith went 14 seconds faster than last year to finish in 48.20 for victory ahead of team-mate Jason Bouttell, 49.22.

Matt Sinclair (Lutterworth Cycle Centre RT) took his

year's tally of open victories into double figures with a winning 53.05 in Matlock CC's 25 at Darley Dale, in Derbyshire.

A repeat of last year's result saw 17-year-old Alex Foster, 52.07, beat Richard Bickley, 53.02, in a one-two for Border City Wheelers in their 22-mile hilly event on the Greystoke Forest circuit.

In road racing, David McGowan secured a win for Pedal Heaven RT in the Liverpool Century Road Race, held over 50 miles on the Pimbo circuit in Lancashire. He took a bunch sprint win from Adam Duggleby (SportGrub-Kuota) with Dillon Byrne (Champion System) third.

And in the VC Venta Summer Crits in Winchester, Ryan Visser (Danny Shane-Storck Racing) held off Cycleworks duo Mike Smith and Ben Marks to top the podium.

North of the border, Johnny Graham (Team Right Move Windows) won the Battle of Black Loch near Falkirk on Saturday, while Neil Muir (Royal Albert CC) was victorious in the VC Glasgow South John Davis Memorial Road Race in East Ayrshire.

Rider of the week

Marc Colclough (NFTO Race Team)

Nige Moore Memorial, West Yorkshire

The 35-year-old made a 240-mile round trip from Wales to Bradford to take part — simply because he had never raced in Yorkshire before. But it proved to be well worth the trip as he raced to victory.

Road racing

Sunday, June 28

Men's National Road Race Championship (Lincoln):

1. Peter Kennaugh (Team Sky) 123.5 miles in 4:27.33; 2. M. Cavendish MBE (Etixx-Quick Step) +0.05; 3. I. Stannard (Team Sky) +0.39; 4. L. Rowe (Team Sky) same time; 5. S. Thwaites (Bora-Argon 18) +3.00; 6. A. Blythe (Orica-GreenEdge) +3.30; 7. O. Doull (Team Wiggins) +6.29; 8. Y. Barker (One Pro Cycling) +8.04; 9. S. Lampier (Raleigh-GAC) +8.05; 10. J. Mould (One Pro Cycling) +8.07.

Women's National Road Race Championship (Lincoln):

1. Elizabeth Armitstead (Boels-Dolmans CT) 67 miles in 2:51.14; 2. A. Barnes (Team Betch NL Superior Brentjens) +1.52; 3. L. Trott (Matrix Fitness); 4. M. Weaver (Matrix Fitness) all same time; 5. N. Harris (Young-Telenet-Fidea CT) +2.01; 6. K. Archibald (Pearl Izumi-Sports Tours International) +2.03; 7. H. Barnes (United Healthcare Pro CT) +2.05; 8. L. Coldwell (unattached) +2.09; 9. S. Laws (Bigla CT) +2.12; 10. H. Simmonds (Team Velosport) +2.15.

Liverpool Century Road Race (Pimbo, Lancs):

E, 1, 2, 3: 1. David McGowan (Pedal Heaven) 50 miles in 1:55.23; 2. A. Duggleby (SportGrub-Kuota); 3. D. Byrne (Champion System); 4. C. Fallon (Liverpool Mercury CC); 5. B. Harding (Paul Milnes Bradford Olympic RC); 6. R. Pike (High On Bikes); 7. J. Smith (Chester RC); 8. J. Pearson (Team Moda-Anon); 9. A. Coupe (Wheelbase); 10. R. Scott (VCUK PH-Mas) all same time.

VC Venta Summer Criterium (Winchester, Hants):

E, 1, 2, 3: 1. Ryan Visser (Danny Shane-Storck Racing); 2. M. Smith (cycleworks.co.uk); 3. B. Marks (cycleworks.co.uk); 4. T. Hargreaves (London Dynamo); 5. M. Mottram (Spokes of Bagshot); 6. O. Hutchings (Bikeshed-Exeter Uni); 7. H. Veale (cycleworks.co.uk); 8. G. Stainton-Ellis (ASL Projects RT); 9. J. Lawless (PMR-Toachim House); 10. K. Blay (cycleworks.co.uk) all same time.
3: 1. Frederick Scheske (Univ of Exeter); 2. A. Hough (VC Venta); 3. E. Rollitt (Eden Veranda Racing); 4. M. Downie (DHC Racing); 5. D. Hitchings (Cotswold Cycles RT).

4: 1. James Donovan (Portsmouth North End CC); 2. M. Buckley (Andover Wheelers); 3. T. Clements (Off Camber); 4. P. Ransom (Sotonia CC); 5. J. Fulcher (Portsdown Hill CC).

Women: 1. Laura Clode (VC St Raphael); 2. E. Harris (Army CU); 3. G. Panchaud (cycleworks.co.uk); 4. A. Fenwick (Univ of Bath CC); 5. M. Webb (VC Venta).

VC Glasgow South John Davis Memorial Road Race (Kilmaurs, East Ayrshire):

Cat 3, 4: 1. Neil Muir (Royal Albert CC) 50 miles in 2:02.27; 2. C. Hinds (Glasgow Green Cycle Club); 3. C. Mitchell (Spokes Racing Team); 4. G. Shirley (www.dooleys-cycles.co.uk); 5. G. O'Malley (Glasgow Couriers); 6. B. Crawshaw (Lune RCC); 7. D. Scott (Paramount CRT); 8. D. Blockley (VC Astar Anderside); 9. A. Merry (Discovery Junior Cycling Club); 10. S. Bell (GJS Cruise Racing) all at same time.

Lea Valley CC Road Race (Radwinter, Essex):

3, 4: 1. Andrew Holmes (VC Revolution) 61 miles

in 2:05.00; 2. S. Griffiths (Pro Cycle Hire UK Racing Team); 3. J. Perks (Chelmer CC); 4. B. Locke (Maldon and District CC); 5. G. Carter (Stowmarket and District CC); 6. P. Miller (Maldon and District CC); 7. R. Farrow (West Suffolk Wheelers and Tri Club); 8. C. Wright (VC Norwich); 9. M. Howard (Pro Cycle Hire UK Racing Team); 10. L. Pendle (Iceni Velo).

Surrey League RR/South Western RC (Dunsfold, Surrey):

3: 1. Gareth Thomas (Paceline RT) 56 miles in 2:18.00; 2. M. Greenwood (VC Meudon); 3. P. Hone (Addiscombe CC); 4. A. Mathers (Army CU); 5. D. Breen (Paceline RT); 6. G. Woodthorpe (Twickenham CC); 7. R. Sibbe (London Dynamo); 8. G. Lulham (unattached); 9. J. Graham (Paceline RT); 10. N. Kerr (Twickenham CC).

The Nige Moore Memorial Road Race (Bradford, West Yorkshire):

3, 4: 1. Marc Colclough (NFTO Race Club) 42 miles in 1:35.00; 2. F. Robinson (Allen Valley Velo) +1.00; 3. E. Evans (Jackpot Racing); 4. G. Saunderson (Petuaria RT); 5. G. Fox (Paul Miles-Bradford Olympic); 6. S. Colloby (CC Abergavenny -JP Signs and Print); 7. J. Ward (Knottingley Velo); 8. D. Beachill (Geared Up Cycles); 9. Benjamin Haywood (Islington Cycling Club); 10. S. Pickering (THR Racing).

Clifton CC Summer Road Race (Sheriff Hutton, North Yorkshire):

2, 3, 4: 1. Kieran Savage (Zepnat RT) 57 miles in 2:10.00; 2. A. Cross (Univ of Sheffield CC); 3. R. Ellis (Albarosa CC); 4. D. Morris (Harrogate Nova CC); 5. C. Sleath (Team Watt); 6. J. Jobber (Langsett Cycles RT); 7. E. Walker (NRG Godleys RT); 8. S. West (G4 Acre RT); 9. R. Feather (Feather Cycles); 10. M. Sloanes (Sunderland Clarion).

Saturday, June 27

Battle of Black Loch Road Race (Siamannan, near Falkirk, Stirlingshire):

3, 4, J: 1. Johnny Graham (Team Right Move Windows) 45 miles in 2:01.38; 2. K. Lindsay (Velo Club Edinburgh) at same time; 3. J. Nellany (Velo Club Edinburgh); 4. S. Grady (GJS Cruise Racing); 5. M. Dunlop (Velo Club Edinburgh); 6. C. Gray (Peebles CC); 7. C. Mitchell (Spokes Racing Team); 8. W. Turner (Falkirk Bicycle Club); 9. S. Gaunt (Kelso Wheelers); 10. D. McGill (TheBicycleWorks) all +0.10.

Friday, June 26

Velosport Surrey League Dunsfold Park Fourths Series (Dunsfold Park, Surrey):

Cat 4: 1. David Edwards (Addiscombe CC) 30 miles in 1:12.34; 2. B. Ventham (private member); 3. A. Yeldham (VC Meudon); 4. O. Hilton (private member); 5. R. Gilham (Charlottesville CC); 6. M. O'Neill (Brighton Mitre); 7. P. Mew (Wyndymilla); 8. P. Lingard (VC Meudon); 9. M. Fredrickson (Thames Velo); 10. D. Robertson (VC Godalming and Haslemere).

Wednesday, June 24

Oxford Road Race League OTCC Closed Circuit Race:

Cat 3, 4, junior: 1. Gavin Howell (Bicester Millennium); 2. A. Franks (Zappis); 3. M. Devaney (Cowley Road Condors); 4. A. Froud (OT Race Team); 5. J. Hewitt (Didcot Phoenix); 6. L. King (Beeline); 7. T. Franks (OT Race Team); 8. M. Prior (Oxonian); 9. D. Arthur (Road CC); 10. D. Marett (GS Henley).
Women: 1. E. Harris (Army Cycling Union); 2. T. Davenne (Zappis); 3. C. Mason (Army Cycling

Union); 4. N. Reddy (RP Racing Team); 5. S. Wilson (Army Cycling Union); 6. L. Cubiss (Cowley Road Condors); 7. A. Fenwick (Oxonian); 8. C. Reid (Cowley Road Condors); 9. T. Prior (OTCC); 10. F. Walton (Cowley Road Condors).

Time trials

Sunday, June 28	
Otley CC 50 (Dishforth, North Yorkshire):	
1. Anthony Bromley (Barnsley RC).....	1:45.01
2. S. Beldon (Team Swift).....	1:46.02
3. B. Metcalf (Team Swift).....	1:47.48
4. M. Wolstenholme (Team Swift)	1:48.17
5. M. Nulty (Glossop Kinder Velo).....	1:49.15
6. T. Van Rossum (Jackpot Racing).....	1:49.54
=7. R. Hamilton (Harrogate Nova CC).....	1:54.52
=7. G. Metcalfe (Otley CC/Chevin Cycles).....	1:54.52
9. J. Trevor (Hull Thursday RC).....	1:55.24
10. D. Hart (Ilkley CC)	1:55.38
Veterans: Simon Beldon	
Women: Eleanor Haresign	
(Harrogate Nova CC).....	2:00.43

Matlock CC 25 (Darley Dale, Derbyshire):	
1. Matt Sinclair (Lutterworth Cycle Centre RT).....	53.05
2. S. Harrison (Lutterworth Cycle Centre RT) ..	54.17
3. C. Mcnaughton (Leicester Forest CC).....	56.09
4. S. Swindley (PMR@Toachim House).....	56.38
5. C. Green (Matlock CC)	56.49
6. M. Williamson (Scunthorpe RC).....	56.52
7. D. Wallwin (Belper BC).....	57.09
8. P. Gould (Matlock CC).....	57.19
9. R. Cordin (Matlock CC).....	57.20
10. L. Bosley (Derby Mercury RC).....	57.29

Medium Gear:	
1. Chris Myhill (Peak Road Club)	1:01.58
2. R. Birkin (Nottingham Clarion CC).....	1:06.17
3. P. Dentith (Congleton CC).....	1:07.01

Thanet Road Club 25 (St Nicholas-at-Wade, Kent):	
1. Chris Fennell (Catford CC/Equipe Banks)	51.47
2. N. Malins (4T+ Velo Club).....	55.19
=3. S. Henderson (Thanet RC).....	57.06
=3. B. Hawkes (Thanet RC)	57.06
5. M. Doxey (Abellio-SFA Racing Team).....	57.39
6. A. Buckley (Adalta CC).....	57.41
7. H. Garip (Thanet RC)	58.06
8. P. Elms (VeloRefined Aerosmiths)	58.09
9. T. Kingston (Deal Tri)	58.14
10. M. Hill (VeloRefined Aerosmiths).....	58.14

Chippenham and District Wheelers Open 25 (Brinkworth, Wiltshire):	
1. Dean Robson (Cheltenham & County CC).....	53.39
2. J. Jones (Drag2zero.com).....	55.10
3. R. Pears (Pro Cycling Magazine RT)	55.39
4. P. Jones (Severn Valley Cycles).....	56.05
5. S. Cottington (Cadence RT)	57.34
6. G. Davis (Dursley RC).....	59.43
7. K. Bexley (Team Optima)	59.51
8. S. Home (Twickenham CC).....	59.52
9. G. Jones (Clevedon and District RC).....	1:00.07
10. J. Jones (Team Optima).....	1:00.25
Woman: Penny Gardiner (PAC-Tri)	1:07.59
Junior: George Jones (Clevedon and District RC).....	1:00.07
Veteran: Jeff Jones (Drag2zero.com).....	55.10

Aberdeen Wheelers 10 (Drumoak, Kincardineshire):	
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Class A:	
1. Philip Kelman (Deeside Thistle CC)	21.17
2. J. Hunter (Aberdeen Wheelers).....	21.21
3. D. Millar (Scottish VTTA)	22.16
Class B:	
1. Michael Spalding (Granite City RT)	22.25
=2. G. Quinn (Deeside Thistle CC).....	22.41
=2. Z. Loney (unattached).....	22.41
Class C:	
Michael Giles (Ythan CC)	23.19
2. C. Cooper (Ythan CC).....	23.27
3. I. Grant (Deeside Thistle CC).....	23.27
Class D:	
1. Russell Craig (Ythan CC)	23.11
2. J. Hall (Deeside Thistle CC).....	23.55
3. S. Walton (Deeside Thistle CC)	24.40
Class E:	
1. Rod Cowe (Aberdeen Wheelers)	24.11
2. R. Hayworth (Aberdeen Wheelers).....	25.16
3. A. Tweedie (Deeside Thistle CC)	25.22
Class F:	
1. Matthew Henderson (Aberdeen Wheelers)	26.54
2. S. Bell (Elgin CC)	27.24
3. J. Prabucki (Deeside Thistle CC).....	27.31

Saturday, June 27	
Burton DCA 50 (Etwall, Derbyshire):	
1. Matt Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	1:35.54
2. R. Bideau (Pendle Forest CC)	1:38.39
3. S. Irwin (North Lancs RC).....	1:38.49
4. C. Taylor (South Pennine RC)	1:39.40
5. P. Gamlin (Northover Vets).....	1:42.35
6. T. Pettinger (Sri Chinmoy CT)	1:42.40
7. J. Wainman (Team Swift).....	1:43.13
8. B. Oliver (Nopinz).....	1:43.45
9. A. Topham (High Wycombe CC)	1:43.51
10 N. Skellern (Team Swift).....	1:44.26
Women: Jasmine Muller (Paceline RT)	1:54.17

API-Metrow 25 (Newmarket, Suffolk):	
1. Matthew Smith (Team VeloVelocity)	48.20
2. J. Bouttell (Team VeloVelocity).....	49.22
=3. C. Ward (Essex Roads CC).....	49.31
=3. J. Lane (CC Ashwell).....	49.31
5. D. Northover (Finsbury Park CC).....	49.46
6. L. Clarke (TMG-Horizon CT).....	49.56
7. D. Bloy (Team VeloVelocity)	50.01
8. P. Lawrence (Team Swift)	50.11
9. K. Lea (Paceline RT).....	50.38
10. R. Clarke (TMG-Horizon CT)	50.39
Women: Alice Lethbridge (GB Cycles.co.uk)	54.53
Team: Team VeloVelocity (Matthew Smith, Jason Bouttell, Daniel Bloy).....	2:28.56

Border City Wheelers 22 (Penrith, Cumbria):	
1. Alex Foster (Border City Wheelers)	52.07
2. R. Bickley (Border City Wheelers).....	52.32
3. T. Brook (Lancaster CC).....	54.21
4. R. Richardson (Teesdale CRC)	55.35
5. P. Pennefather (Rock to Roll Cycles).....	55.38
6. P. Greenwood (Team Swift).....	55.42
7. K. Melvin (Border City Wheelers)	56.05
8. B. Pool (Annan 2010 Racing).....	56.13
9. D. Orme (Kent Valley RC)	56.25
10. J. O'Callaghan (Barrow Central Wheelers) ..	56.27
Veterans: Russ Richardson	
Junior: Tom Roper (Beacon Wheelers)	56.47
Women: Nick Hamilton (Teesdale CRC)	59.28

Northampton & District CA 20.8 (Old, Northamptonshire):	
1. Jon Simpkins (drag2zero.com)	45.17
2. P. Nicholls (Team PB Performance)	46.02
3. A. Green (Lutterworth Cycle Centre RT)	46.22
4. P. Lunn (Fenland Clarion CC)	46.26

5. J. Middleton (Media Velo/Dynamic Rides) ..	46.42
6. D. Langlands (Fenland Clarion CC).....	46.59
7. J. Gelsthorpe (Peterborough CC).....	47.00
8. L. Hattersley (St Ives CC)	47.07
9. A. Roffe (Team Salesengine.co.uk).....	47.54
10. J. Stewart (Bonito Squadra Corse)	48.05
Team: Fenland Clarion CC (Paul Lunn, David Langlands, Simon Pitchford 48.39).....	2:22.04
Women: Jackie Field (CC Ashwell).....	51.45

Alton CC 10 (Bentley, Hants):	
1. James Boyman (Farnham RC).....	19.36
2. J. Stratton (Thames Turbo Tri Club).....	20.17
3. W. Sybrandy (Nuun-Sigma Sport)	20.18
4. S. Henning (Catford CC).....	20.48
5. S. Berogna (VC St Raphael).....	20.57
6. R. Froud (Alton CC)	20.58
7. M. Charlton (Farnborough and Camberley CC)	21.01

8. P. Watts (North Hants RC).....	21.13
9. J. Hughes (VC Godalming and Haslemere) ...	21.36
10. P. Younghusband (Petersfield Tri Club).....	21.42
Team: Farnham RC (Boyman, White 22.45, Willis 24.20).....	1:06.41
Women: Kate McNeill (Berkshire Tri)	22.09
Juniors: Samuel Henning.	

Ludlow CC 10 (Brinfield, Herefordshire):	
1. Matthew Davies (Paramount CRT).....	20.15
2. J. Howard (Wyre Forest CC)	20.52
3. S. Minton (Ludlow CC).....	21.01
4. M. Millward (Worcester St. Johns)	21.03
5. S. Harrison (Mid-Shropshire Wheelers)	21.15
6. D. Cutting (Climb On Bikes).....	21.22
7. O. Hayward (University Of Birmingham).....	22.06
8. D. Watts (Royal Air Force CC).....	22.06
9. R. Coleman (Stourbridge Velo)	22.22
10. R. Nickless (Revolutions Racing)	22.28

The year's fastest

10 MILES				
	Rider	Time	Course	Date
1	Bradley Wiggins (Team Wiggins)	17.58	V718	16/05/15
2	S. Irwin (North Lancs RC)	18.40	V718	30/05/15
3	R. Bideau (Pendle Forest CC)	18.41	V718	30/05/15
4	D. Barnett (drag2zero.com)	18.49	V718	03/06/15
5	D. Barnett (drag2zero.com)	18.50	V718	30/05/15
6	M. Jones (drag2zero.com)	18.51	V718	17/06/15
7	A. Wareham (Team Swift)	18.55	V718	03/06/15
8	D. Barnett (drag2zero.com)	18.59	V718	17/06/15
=9	E. Bradbury (Cambridge Univ CC)	19.01	H10/17	11/04/15
=9	R. Pears (Procycling RT)	19.01	V718	30/05/15
=9	M. Jones (drag2zero.com)	19.01	V718	03/06/15

25 MILES				
	Rider	Time	Course	Date
1	Matt Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	46.30	A25/11	20/06/15
2	S. Irwin (North Lancs RC)	47.08	A25/11	20/06/15
3	A. Jackson (Team Swift)	47.16	A25/11	20/06/15
4	K. Davies (Team NBCC)	47.19	R25/3h	26/04/15
5	M. Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	47.28	A25/11	11/04/15
=6	M. Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	47.31	A25/11	09/05/15
=6	K. Davies (Team NBCC)	47.31	R25/7	10/05/15
8	R. Bideau (Pendle Forest CC)	47.48	A25/11	20/06/15
9	K. Davies (Team NBCC)	48.03	R25/3l	31/05/15
10	K. Davies (Team NBCC)	48.10	R25/3h	03/05/15

50 MILES				
	Rider	Time	Course	Date
1	Matt Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	1:35.54	A50/6	27/06/15
2	R. Bideau (Pendle Forest CC)	1:38.39	A50/6	27/06/15
3	S. Irwin (North Lancs RC)	1:38.49	A50/6	27/06/15
4	C. Taylor (South Pennine RC)	1:39.40	A50/6	27/06/15
5	D. Green (Team Veloveloccity.co.uk)	1:40.32	E2/50c	13/06/15
6	P. Lawrence (Team Swift)	1:40.33	E2/50c	13/06/15
7	M. Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	1:41.22	J4/16	13/06/15
8	D. Lazenby (Baines Racing Silverstone Cycles)	1:42.00	E2/50c	13/06/15
9	A. Topham (High Wycombe CC)	1:42.18	H50/8	10/05/15
10	P. Gamlin (Northover VT)	1:42.35	A50/6	27/06/15

100 MILES				
	Rider	Time	Course	Date
1	Adam Topham (High Wycombe CC)	3:34.01	H100/88	24/05/15
2	T. Pettinger (Sri Chinmoy CT)	3:41.45	E2/100	21/06/15
3	M. Turnbull (Torq Performance)	3:42.13	E2/100	21/06/15
4	C. Ward (Essex Roads CC)	3:42.27	E2/100	21/06/15
5	J. Wynn (Northover Vets)	3:42.35	E2/100	21/06/15
6	D. Lazenby (Baines Racing)	3:43.42	E2/100	21/06/15
7	A. Meilak (VeloRefined Aerosmiths)	3:45.12	Q100	14/06/15
8	P. Harrison (GS Henley)	3:45.50	H100/88	24/05/15
9	S. Irwin (North Lancs RC)	3:46.02	D100/2r	25/05/15
10	R. Spink (Bristol South CC)	3:46.21	H100/88	24/05/15

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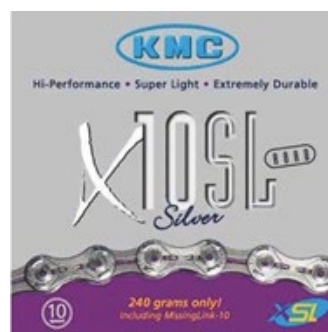
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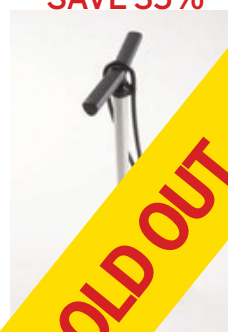
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ROBERTS AUDAX COMPACT Reynolds 853 Metallic royal blue, 54tt, 54st, 17cm head. Crane Creek headset. Stronglight 46/36/26 and bb. Shimano SPDs. Nova Tech hubs on hand built Mavic Pro 32s. Conti Ultragators. Shimano XT 9spd 11-32, Campag Comp fd. Campag Athena ergo levers with Crane Creek crossstop levers. Shimano 650 brakes. Deda bars, USE stem and seat post. SKS guards. Tubus rack. Immaculate condition. £1600 buyer collects Surrey. Tel 01737 248950 email: keynotemusic@btinternet.com. £1600. Surrey. Tel: 01737 248950. Email: keynotemusic@btinternet.com 2/7



SPECIALIZED TARMAC PRO SL (2009) 54CM SRAM Red 10 speed with Force brakes, Specialized FACT Pro carbon chainset (53/39) and Mavic Ksyrium SL wheels. New Continental Grand Prix 4000S II tyres and new Lizard Skin bar tape. Very well looked after, less than 2000 miles and in great condition - few minor chips and scratches in line with age. £1,100 Location: Skipton. Tel: 01756 748973. Email: mtlilney@hotmail.co.uk 2/7



CUBE GTC AGREE CARBON Too big for me selling to make way for replacement. Cube size 56cm measures at 53cm, full 105 10spd group (11/28), compact 34/50, pedals included. Easton wheels, new Clement tyres. Cosmetic damage to saddle and rear QR skewer rest pristine. £650. Cardiff. Tel: 07577 021954. Email: i.tucker@btinternet.com 2/7



CERVELO R3 2013 size 51 Silver/Red. Dura Ace components throughout. HED Ardennes wheels with new pro 4 tyres. Unused since last August. Immaculate condition. FSA bars and stem. 3T carbon seat post. Fantastic buy for a 15 Lb high end bike at only £1225. £1225. West Midlands. Tel: 07917 667576. Email: johnedwards272@googlemail.com 2/7

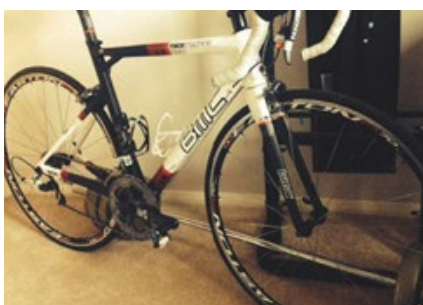
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PINARELLO GALILEO 55CM Alloy frame, carbon forks, carbon seat stays. Campag record 10sp. Mavic Ksyrium Elites, most Upgrade bars carbon stem. Excellent condition £900 North Lancs. Mobile - 07778 492530 2/7

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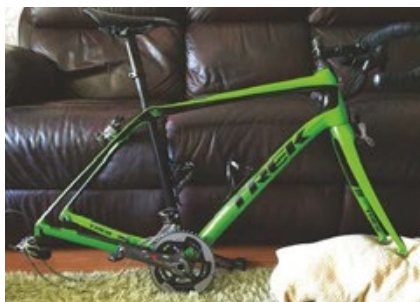


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KUOTA K UNO Size XL 55cm. Lightly used. SRAM Force groupset. Wifli cassette 11-32. Mavic Ksyrium Elite S wheels. Continental GP 4000 S tyres. Photo on Preloved website. £1,700. Darlington. Tel: 01325 468155 9/7

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BMC 2013 TMR01 FRAME AND GROUPSET 56cm frame with Ultegra drive train, 50/34 chain rings with 10 speed rear cassette. Only 280km cycled with injury forcing a reluctant sale. Extremely quick bike with awesome design features to reduce drag. £2200. Aberdeen. Tel: 07834 369889. Email: seds_ltd@yahoo.com 2/7



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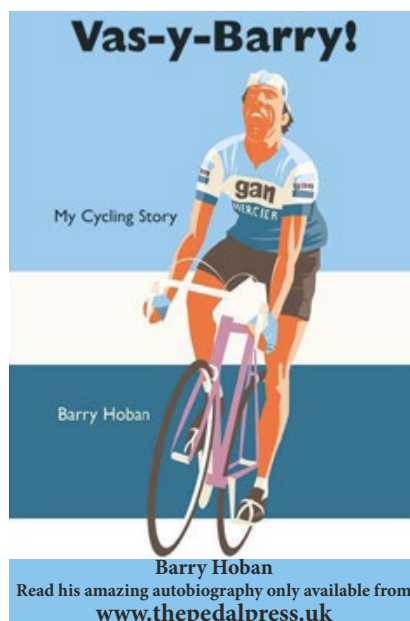
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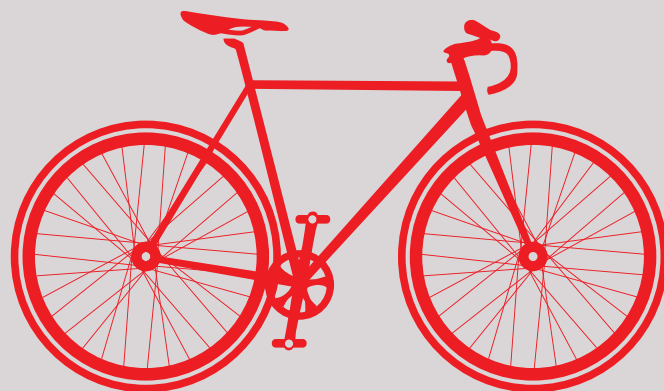
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Dr Hutch

Superstition surrounds the world of cycling, says a sceptical Doc

doctorhutch_cycling@timeinc.com



I had a strange conversation with my old friend Bernard recently. Or, to be specific, stranger than is normal. To put it in context, Bernard has been contemplating a return to racing, and contemplating it with all the zesty optimism that those of you who've come to know him would expect.

He is, to summarise, doomed — a sprint that was once merely creaky is now so defective that its deployment would be a lot more likely to put him in A&E than on top of any local podiums.

However, I wasn't expecting this question. "Mate," he said, "can you remember my superstitions?"

"Sorry?"

"You know, I used to have lots of things I did before races, for good luck. And it's so long since I've

raced I've forgotten them all. I know I always wore clean socks, but that's the only one I can think of."

"That's hygiene, not really superstition," I said.

I don't know that I can count the bike-racing superstitions. You're never supposed to shave your legs in the morning, only in the evening. Don't turn your bike upside down, for any reason. You shouldn't pull your vest the right way round if it comes out of the washing machine inside-out. You must always wear the race number 13 upside down, and if you don't, other riders will nag you until you do, lest you bring down upon the whole race the vengeful wrath of the ghost of Jacques Anquetil.

(Anquetil was one of the most superstitious riders of all — he once spent a Tour de France rest day locked in a darkened hotel room, trembling with fear because a fortune teller had predicted his death on that day. Having survived, he went out for a huge dinner, with much wine, and got dropped on the first hill the following morning.)

Shaving your face on the morning of a time trial is meant to be bad luck. This on the basis that the energy saved might make the difference between winning and losing. I have some doubts about this. Richard Virenque always took to a time trial start line with a fluffy chin, but that was probably because he had a sufficient number of dodgy stimulants in his bloodstream that hair was spraying uncontrollably out of his face. I suspect he was



Clean socks: in keeping with both hygiene and superstition

clean-shaven when he started his warm-up, stubbly on the start ramp, and looked like Father Time when he arrived at the finish.

Fettling fanatic

Bernard subscribed to all of these superstitions, and to many more. For instance, he always tried to deal with his nerves through the medium of bike fettling, which meant that as far as anyone could judge, one of his superstitions was to break an essential part of his bike the night before an event.

I recall clearly, for instance, the occasion when he decided

Acts of Cycling Stupidity

A few seasons ago, early in the morning at a time trial in South Yorkshire, I was sitting on a bike on a turbo-trainer in a layby in the middle of nowhere very much, warming up.

I was pedalling majestically away, when along the road came half a dozen young men, clearly ambling home from a night out somewhere. Suddenly, sitting there all alone riding a stationary bike while wearing the traditional Lycra suit, and shoes with rubber aero booties over the top, I felt a bit apprehensive. There was an aggressive air about the men, who had, I noticed, a couple of bulldogs in tow. This did not look likely to end in a dignified manner.

They fell silent as they approached. They stopped, and gathered around me. "Hey mate," said one of them. "Is this a bike race or summat?"

"Um... yes," I said.

"Good luck, mate," he said. And they wandered off.

GREAT INVENTIONS OF CYCLING

Paced racing 1870s

For most of the early years of cycling, almost all records, and a lot of the racing, were 'paced': the rider had pace-makers to help him. The first Hour records were usually set with pacers, the early short-distance records almost invariably so.

In the penny-farthing era, this wasn't a very big deal, because to a man sitting bolt-upright six feet in the air, aerodynamics was a secondary consideration.

By the time of the chain-driven safety bike, however, it started to make quite a difference. The first advance was pacing of solo riders by tandems, then triplets, then quads and finally quints — five men riding a bike the length of a lorry.

In turn, this led to pacing by teams of quints — so that a rider attacking a mile record might have four different quint teams to pace him in sequence, with the changeovers a work of high-speed art.

There were even faster options. American hero, Charles 'Mile-a-Minute' Murphy topped 60mph riding behind a train on Long Island in 1899. And if, in 1910, you'd asked a cycling fan what the World Hour record was, they'd have told you it was Frenchman Paul Guignard's 63 miles, 255 yards, set behind a motorbike.

The last hurrah of major paced racing was probably the Bordeaux to Paris Classic, the second half of which was ridden behind derny motorbikes.

The last paced edition was ridden in 1985.



“It’s not like I’ll have to stop. I mean, Wales is pretty flat, yes?”

to overhaul a set of perfectly functional brakes in a Welsh hotel room at 11pm, and stripped the threads on the cable-clamp bolt. “Ah, stuff it,” he said. “It’s not like I’m going to have to stop. I mean, Wales is pretty flat, yes?”

Not very flat, no, but I wanted to get to sleep, so I said nothing.

I gave Bernard a list of all the racers’ superstition I could think of, plus a few more of my own invention. (“Don’t rub sun-block in, just leave it on your face in blobs. Always wear your left track mitt inside out. Address all race commissaires as ‘Yo! Bro!’”)

He was very happy. Without superstitions, the only way to get ready for his comeback would have been dedicated training. Now he could avoid all of that, and devote himself full-time to wearing half his clothes inside-out and avoiding razors. Which is pretty much what he does anyway.



LeMond blazed a trail for low-drag design

LeMond's aero bars

Simon Smythe recalls how a time trial bar opened the door to wind-cheating tech

The 1989 Tour is inextricably linked with the first use of tri-bars in the peloton. Would Greg LeMond, who started the final time trial 50 seconds behind Laurent Fignon on GC, have triumphed by that famous eight-second margin without them?

LeMond's radical 'aero bar', designed by Boone Lennon, a former US national ski team coach who understood aerodynamics perhaps better than anybody in cycling at that time, was unveiled before the stage five time trial — 73km from Dinard to Rennes. The American's directeur sportif, Jose De Cauwer, presented the bike fitted with the aero bar to the commissaires the day before: "I went early, so no one from any

other team would see we were intending to use them," De Cauwer told *Cycling Weekly* in 2009. "I said, 'LeMond wants to use these bars.'

"The chief judge said, 'OK, you can use it, no problem.' I carried on. 'He has a problem with his back; this is more comfortable for him.' The judge replied, 'I said it's OK, he can use them.' Then I got out of there."

LeMond won by 24 seconds and took over the yellow jersey. It seemed like an impressive return to form following the hunting accident two years earlier that had nearly killed him.

Raising the bar

LeMond knew the difference the new bar had made. He had tested it with a team-mate, Jaanus Kuum, who was on a standard time trial bike with a bullhorn bar. He and Kuum had used heart rate to gauge whether there was an advantage to be had. LeMond worked up to 175bpm on the tri-bars, while Kuum sat on his

wheel. Even tucked in behind LeMond, Kuum found it hard to stay on.

Before the final time trial Fignon's directeur sportif, the wily Cyrille Guimard, had complained to the referee about LeMond's bars, to no avail. Now LeMond was ripping up and down the Champs-Élysées, arms stretched out in front like a downhill skier, eating into Fignon's margin. LeMond had asked not to be given time checks because he wanted to ride flat-out. Fignon, meanwhile, was riding disc wheels front and rear and was battling with his unstable bike. The bespectacled Frenchman sweated and grimaced all the way to the line, his ponytail flapping in the wind like a white flag.

Those unforgettable scenes on the Champs-Élysées in 1989 heralded the beginning of cycling's aero revolution. Although today's super-slippery time trial bikes look nothing like LeMond's red steel Bottecchia with its U-shaped bar, that was where it started.

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